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DE QUINCEY'S COLLECTED WRITINGS

VOL. III

LONDON REMINISCENCES AND CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM-EATER

THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF THOMAS DE QUINCEY

BY

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

In this volume those Autobiographic Papers of De Quincey which contain what may be called more especially his "London Reminiscences" are brought into connexion, for the first time, with his famous "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater." The connexion is close, chronologically and otherwise.

I.—De Quincey's London Reminiscences.

De Quincey's first sight of London had been in May 1800, when, as he has told us in the chapter of his Autobiography entitled "The Nation of London," he and his boy-friend Lord Westport were together for a few hours in the metropolis before passing over into Ireland. He was then but a schoolboy in his fifteenth year. More than two years later, from some time in the closing months of 1802 to March in 1803, there was that fatal plunge into London, during his period of vagrancy after he had run away from Manchester Grammar School, the haggard experiences of which are heard of more than once in his Autobiographic Sketches, and again and more largely and terribly in his "Confessions." He was in his eighteenth year when this escapade was terminated by his return to his mother's house at Chester; and it was late in 1803 when he went to Oxford and began that period of his resident University life which ended in 1808, and brought him from his nineteenth year to his twenty-third. There were frequent visits to London, in vacations and at other times, during those four or five years

of his Oxford residence, — one of them that visit of 1804 from which he dates the formation of his opium-eating habit; and London seems also to have been his headquarters, occasionally at least, during those subsequent eighteen months or so of desultory movement hither and thither to different parts of England which intervened between his leaving Oxford and his definite settlement of himself, in November 1809, in Wordsworth's old cottage at Grasmere. Then follow the ten or eleven years of his continuously recluse life in the Lake district,—first as still a bachelor from 1809 to 1816, and then as a married man from 1816 to 1821,—which furnished him afterwards with the matter of those magazine papers on Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, &c., and of Lake reminiscence generally, that have been left behind us in the last volume. Now and again, even in the course of those ten or eleven years, we do hear of an incidental run-up of his to London, to continue former acquaintanceships there or to form new ones; but it is not till 1821, when he was thirty-six years of age, that we light upon that longer visit to London which was to be historically the most memorable.

In easy circumstances when he had settled in Grasmere, in consequence of his having come into possession of the share of the family inheritance which had been left him by his deceased father, and which had been managed for him by guardians till his majority, De Quincey had, some time before his marriage, suffered some pecuniary disaster; and gradually, after his marriage, matters had grown worse and worse. Immersed in books and studies, and projecting great philosophical and literary works, but meanwhile doing nothing else than live on dreamily in his Grasmere cottage, with a laudanum decanter always near him on a side-table, he had latterly, for several years,—in that agony of his extreme opium-prostration, that paralysis of all his faculties by his boundless use of the infernal drug, of which he has left such appalling descriptions in one part of his "Confessions,"— been at the very lowest ebb of his fortunes. Shaken loose at last, in some degree, from his opium-thraldom, just when lunacy or suicide seemed inevitable, he had roused himself for any kind of literary exertion that might earn him

money. For about a year, in 1819-20, there had been an experiment, with wretched pay, in the editorship of a weekly Tory newspaper, called the *Westmoreland Gazette*, published at Kendal; after which, in the winter of 1820-21, he had spent some months in Edinburgh, attracted thither by pleasant recollections of a former visit to the town in his bachelor days in the convoy of his friend and fellow-Lakist Wilson, and by the fact that Wilson was now, both as the "Christopher North" of *Blackwood's Magazine* and as Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, an all-influential man in Edinburgh literary circles. Somehow or other that visit to Edinburgh had been abortive; and hence De Quincey's transference of himself, in August 1821, to the other main focus of British literary commerce in those days, viz. London.

In London success was immediate and splendid. His "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," appearing in September and October 1821 in the pages of the *London Magazine*,—then the chief London monthly, with a brilliant staff of contributors, consisting of Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, Allan Cunningham, and others of hardly less note,—secured him the command of that periodical for as many more contributions as he chose, and seemed also to point to his permanent connexion with London thenceforward. That, however, would have been a false prophecy. After some months in London in 1821,—mostly in shy privacy, his sudden celebrity notwithstanding,—he was back in Grasmere; and, though he did come and go between Grasmere and London a good deal through the next year or two, and did resume his contributorship to the *London Magazine*,—supplying it with a large number of miscellaneous articles through 1823 and 1824,—the result of his experience was that, what with his shattered health, and what with the insufficiency of his earnings at the utmost rate of industry of which he was capable, permanent connexion with London was out of the question. His last stay there of any length was in 1825; on the 24th of February in which year,—his resources from the magazine of his main dependence having suddenly ceased through a change in its proprietorship, and nothing having been left him instead but drudgery at casual hack-work,—he wrote to

his friend Wilson in Edinburgh in terms of the most abject despondency. "At this moment," he wrote, "I have not a place to hide my head in"; adding, "With a good publisher, and leisure to premeditate what I write, I might yet liberate myself: after which, having paid everybody, I would slink into some dark corner, educate my children, and show my face in the world no more." He lingered on for some time longer in London; but the same year found him back again in Grasmere, relieved indeed from his immediate straits by the generous intervention of his mother and his Indian uncle, but uncertain whither he should go next. As it chanced, it was Edinburgh, after all, that was to be his destination for the rest of his life; but this he did not yet foresee.

After this sketch of De Quincey's intermittent familiarity with London and residences in London through the quarter of a century from 1800 to 1825, it may surprise one to learn from himself that his entire London life, if all the constituent portions of it were put together, did not make an aggregate of more than a year and a half. One suspects a lapse of memory in the calculation; or it may be that he took into account only so much of his intermittent dallyings with London as lay between 1808, when he left Oxford, and 1825, when he returned to the Lakes disheartened after his final visit. Certain it is that it is to this stretch of time that there belong those London literary acquaintanceships of De Quincey which were most interesting to himself, and his reminiscences of which he thought it worth while to include in the series of his autobiographic papers contributed to *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* between 1834 and 1841. They came into that series in no very studied order, intermixed with the Lake reminiscences of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, &c.; but in the present volume they are extricated from that companionship and put by themselves in seven successive chapters, in what seems the most natural order of their subjects. The date and place of the appearance of each paper will be found duly noted at the commencement of each; and it is enough to say here that all the papers are from *Tait's Magazine* of the years 1837-1841, with the single exception of the second article on "Walking Stewart,"

which had appeared long previously in the *London Magazine*. There is, however, the omission of one paper of the London series as published in *Tait* in the specified years: to wit, a paper of September 1838, bearing no distinct title in the magazine, but reprinted in the American edition of De Quincey under the title "Walladmor." The reason for this omission is that this particular paper is of a special nature, disconnecting it from the rest, and will best be reserved for a future volume, where it may be made more intelligible by certain required accompaniments.

II.—Confessions of an English Opium-Eater.

This famous first publication of De Quincey appeared originally, as we have said, in two successive parts in the *London Magazine* for September and October 1821, when he had just entered on his thirty-seventh year. Mr. (afterwards Sergeant and Judge) Talfourd had introduced him to the publishers and editors of the magazine, Messrs. Taylor and Hessey; and the papers had been written, in the course of the preceding month or so, in an obscure lodging which he occupied near Covent Garden. Although the numbers of the magazine in which they appeared contained also two of the "Elia" essays of Charles Lamb, with articles by other well-known members of the established staff of contributors, the new contributor at once eclipsed the rest. To the first article, as it appeared in the September number, in twenty pages of double columns, with the title, "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater: Being an Extract from the Life of a Scholar," there was appended an editorial note in these words,—"The remainder of this very interesting article will be given in the next number"; and, when the next, or October, number came, not only had the second part of the "Confessions" the place of honour in it, filling the first twenty-seven pages, but an opportunity was taken, in connexion with a note which De Quincey had sent respecting an error in the chronology of the first part, for this unusual editorial encomium,—"We are not often in the habit of eulogising our own work; but we cannot neglect the oppor-

tunity which the following explanatory note gives us of calling the attention of our readers to the deep, eloquent, and masterly paper which stands first in our present number. Such Confessions, so powerfully uttered, cannot fail to do more than interest the reader." The reception of the papers by the public was correspondingly eager. There were notices of them in the newspapers; and everywhere people were talking of the strange "Opium-eater," wondering who he was, and desiring more of his singular "Confessions." Though that was not so easy, De Quincey was disposed to comply with the desire. Nothing from his pen appeared in the November number of the *London Magazine;* but in the December number, which contained an article of his on Jean Paul Richter, with translated specimens from Richter's writings, there was also a longish letter to the editor, in which De Quincey, after commenting upon some of the criticisms he had seen on the two papers of his "Confessions,"—especially a very appreciative one by James Montgomery, the poet, which had been published in the *Sheffield Iris,*—pledged himself distinctly to a "Third Part" of the "Confessions," to be drawn up after his "return to the north," which he hoped would be "in the course of next week." As this letter is of considerable interest in connexion with the history of De Quincey's first famous publication, and has never been reprinted hitherto, place will be found for it in the Appendix. Suffice it here to say that the promised "Third Part" was never written, and that indeed, though the editor of the *London Magazine* had announced in the same number, in addition to this "Third Part," an independent set of papers by "The English Opium-Eater," to be entitled "Translations in Prose and Verse from the most eminent of the Fine Writers of Modern Germany, with a Character of the Genius of each Author," nothing more is heard of De Quincey in the pages of the magazine for another year. Meanwhile the continued popularity of the actually published two parts of the "Confessions" had been such that Messrs. Taylor and Hessey had resolved to reprint them in separate book-form. This was done in a little duodecimo volume, price 5s., which appeared late in 1822, and which, though it did not contain the promised Third Part, contained a substitute for it in a

whimsical so-called "Appendix," furnished by De Quincey from Grasmere, and dated "Sept. 30, 1822." In justice to the subscribers to the *London Magazine*, it was thought right that they should have the benefit of this "Appendix" without purchasing the separate little volume itself; and accordingly, in the number of the magazine for December 1822 it was printed entire, under the title, "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater: Appendix," with this introductory editorial note: "The interest excited by the two papers bearing this title, in our numbers for September and October 1821, will have kept our promise of a THIRD PART fresh in the remembrance of our readers. That we are still unable to fulfil our engagement in its original meaning will, we are sure, be matter of regret to them, as to ourselves, especially when they have perused the following affecting narrative. It was composed for the purpose of being appended to an edition of the CONFESSIONS in a separate volume which is already before the public; and we have reprinted it entire, that our Subscribers may be in possession of the whole of this extraordinary history." This was the closing incident in the publication of the "Confessions" in their original form. When De Quincey resumed his contributorship to the *London Magazine* (which he did in January 1823), it was in articles of a different kind, or rather of various different kinds. He was an indefatigable contributor through 1823 and 1824,—only one number of the magazine through those two years appearing without something from his pen in it, and some of the numbers containing two articles, or even as many as three, from his pen. Most of these, to recommend them to the readers, bore the words "By the Author of the Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" on their front, or the signature "X. Y. Z." (which was understood to be equivalent) at the end; and, to as late as December 1824, when De Quincey's contributions to the magazine stopped, by reason of the transference of the proprietorship into other and less liberal hands than those of Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, there was no sign of any weariness on the part of the public with what came from their favourite "Opium-Eater." Charles Lamb's charming essays continued to be another of the attractions of the magazine through the same years; and a new contributor

in the course of the same years was Thomas Carlyle. Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, on the recommendation of Edward Irving, had accepted the unknown young Scotsman's "Life and Writings of Schiller" for publication in instalments in their magazine; and the instalments appeared, all anonymously, in the numbers for October 1823, and January, July, and September 1824, each instalment in conjunction with something of De Quincey's in the same number.

The little book of 1822, which had first flashed De Quincey's name on the public, or rather fastened on him that cognomen of "The English Opium-Eater" which attended him through all the rest of his life, had already gone through at least six London editions in its original form before the commencement in 1853 of the Collective Edinburgh Edition of De Quincey's writings. De Quincey had, of course, resolved that the "Confessions" should be included in this Collective Edition; but, reverting to that notion of his which he had intimated in the *London Magazine* in December 1821,—to wit, that the "Confessions" were far from complete in the two parts of them which were all that he had been able up to that date to publish in the magazine, and might be advantageously extended to a "third part" by additions when he should be at leisure,—he had resolved on taking the opportunity which the new Collective Edition afforded of giving effect at last to that notion. Accordingly, when the "Confessions" appeared in the fifth volume of the Collective Edition, published in 1856, they did not appear in their original and comparatively brief form, but in a revised and greatly enlarged form, swelling them out to nearly three times their original bulk. All the original matter was absorbed into this enlarged edition, though with modifications both of sentiment and of expression here and there; but round this original nucleus there was an accretion of a very large quantity of such additional autobiographic recollections as those which De Quincey seems to have had in view in December 1821, when he promised a "third part" of the "Confessions," to be written at Grasmere. In short, De Quincey's edition of the "Confessions" in 1856, though it retained the original edition as its core, was put forth by him as that sole form of the work which he could regard as

sufficiently satisfactory to himself, and as meant by him, therefore, to supersede and cancel the original and more diminutive edition.

There are some who demur to this judgment, and express a preference still, in some respects, for the original and smaller edition. At all events, that smaller original edition being the only one the copyright of which has expired, there have been recent reprints of it in competition with the author's enlarged and still copyright edition of 1856. By far the best, and the finest typographically, of these reprints is that of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co., edited in 1885 by Mr. Richard Garnett, and enriched by an introduction and other accompaniments from Mr. Garnett's own hand, as well as by some Notes of De Quincey's London Conversations in those very months of 1821 when the "Confessions" had first made him famous, recovered from the manuscripts of a Mr. Richard Woodhouse. That reprint of 1885, therefore, has a value all its own in what may be called the literature of De Quinceyana, apart from any interest one may feel in the critical question whether the original edition of the "Confessions" or the enlarged edition is to be preferred. So far as we are concerned here, that question is decided for us by De Quincey's own act and deed. By his own act and deed the enlarged edition of 1856 was intended to be the final edition, superseding the other; and by *his* intention we are bound to abide. The reprint in this volume, therefore, is from the enlarged edition of 1856. As this includes and incorporates, as we have said, the whole of the matter of the original edition, only with an increased richness in the shape of much excellent additional matter into the bargain, it must certainly be the standard form of the book henceforth for all new readers of De Quincey, while any readers of his for whom the earlier text may have interest, whether as a bibliographical curiosity or as an old favourite, may gratify themselves by procuring Mr. Garnett's edition of it. In one point, however, we may consult the convenience of those who would like to compare the enlarged edition of 1856 with the original edition. When we say that the enlarged edition includes and incorporates all the matter of the original, there is one exception. The so-called "Appendix"

contributed by De Quincey to the little volume of 1822, by way of supplement to the "two parts" of the "Confessions" as they had previously appeared in the *London Magazine*, and of temporary substitute for the still unwritten "third part," was thrown aside altogether by De Quincey when he enlarged the work in 1856. He probably thought it then unnecessary, in consequence of his virtual achievement of "Part III" at last by his expansion of the original Parts I. and II. On any ground, he judged rightly. The so-called "Appendix" was no improvement on the "Confessions" as they had first appeared in the magazine, but actually a disfigurement. As it does, however, contain some things not reproduced in the latest and enlarged text, and as, moreover, it is of some interest as a specimen of De Quincey's faculty of ingenious rigmarole when he was hard pressed for something better, room is made for it, as well as for the other document previously mentioned here, in what is now the Appendix in another sense, provided by De Quincey himself at the end of his enlarged work for the reception of such superfluities.

D. M.

LONDON REMINISCENCES

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CHAPTER I

SIR HUMPHRY DAVY: MR. GODWIN: MRS. GRANT OF LAGGAN[1]

Sir Humphry Davy, of all those whom I have just mentioned[2]—nay, of all the eminent persons whom I have ever seen even by a casual glimpse—was the most agreeable to know on the terms of a slight acquaintance. What he might have proved upon a closer intimacy, I cannot say; not having had the honour of any such connexion with him. My acquaintance had never gone far enough to pass the barrier of *strangership*, and the protection which lies in that consciousness, reciprocally felt; for, if friendship and confidential intimacy have the power to confer privileges, there are other privileges which they take away; and many times it is better to be privileged as the "stranger" of a family than as its friend. Some I have known who, therefore, only called a man their friend that they might have a license for taking liberties with him. Sir Humphry, I have no reason to believe, would have altered for the worse on a closer connexion. But for myself I know him only within ceremonious bounds; and I must say that nowhere, before or since, have I seen a man who had so felicitously caught the fascinating tone of high-bred urbanity which distinguishes the best part of the British nobility. The first time of my seeing him was

[1] From *Tait's Magazine* for March 1837.—M.

[2] In the concluding sentence of De Quincey's article in *Tait* of the preceding month,—that reprinted in Vol. II. of this edition under the title "A Manchester Swedenborgian and a Liverpool Literary Coterie,"—he had enumerated certain other literary acquaintances of his of whom he intended to speak in future articles; and Sir Humphry Davy was one of them.—M.

at the *Courier* office, in a drawing-room then occupied by Mr. Coleridge, and as a guest of that gentleman: this must have been either in 1808 or 1809. Sir Humphry (I forget whether then a baronet, but I think not)[1] had promised to drink tea with Mr. Coleridge, on his road to a meeting of the Royal Society; before which learned body he was on that evening to read some paper or other of his own composition. I had the honour to be invited as sole "respondent" to the learned philosopher; sole supporter of the antistrophe in our choral performance. It sounded rather appalling to be engaged in a glee for three voices with two performers such as these; and I trepidated a little as I went up stairs, having previously understood that the great man was already come. The door was thrown open by the servant who announced me; and I saw at once, in full proportions before me, the full-length figure of the young *savant*, not perhaps above ten years older than myself,[2] whose name already filled all the post-horns of Europe, and levied homage from Napoleon. He was a little below the middle height; agreeable in his person, and amiable in the expression of his countenance. His dress was elaborately accurate and fashionable—no traces of soot or furnace *there;* it might be said, also, that it was youthful and almost gay in its character. But what chiefly distinguished him from other men was the captivating—one might call it the *radiant*—courtesy of his manner. It was at once animated and chastised by good-breeding; graceful, and, at the same time, gracious.

From a person so eminent it would not have been a sufficient encouragement that his manner should be, in a *passive* sense, courteous. This would have expressed only a consciousness of what was due to himself. But Sir Humphry's manner was conciliatory and intentionally winning. To a person as obscure as myself it held out the flattering expressions of a wish to recommend himself, an assurance of interest in your person, and a desire both to know and to be known. In such expressions of feeling, when they are borne

[1] He was knighted 8th April 1812, and promoted to a baronetcy some years later.—M.

[2] Sir Humphry was hardly seven years older than De Quincey, having been born 17th December 1778.—M.

upon the very surface of the manners, and scattered like sunbeams indiscriminately upon all who fall within their range, doubtless there must be something of artifice and a polished hypocrisy. And nobody can more readily acknowledge than myself the integrity which lies at the bottom of our insular reserve and moroseness. Two sound qualities are at the root of these unpleasant phenomena—modesty or unpresumingness in the first place, and sincerity in the second. To be impudent was so much of the essence of profligacy in the ideas of the ancients that the one became the most ordinary expression[1] for the other; and sincerity, again, or directness of purpose, is so much of the essence of conscientiousness that we take *obliquity* or *crookedness* for one way of expounding dishonesty or depravity of the moral sense—and, according to their natural tendencies, no doubt this is true. But such things admit of many modifications. Without absolute dissimulation, it is allowable and even laudable to reject, by a second or amended impulse, what the first involuntary impulse would have prompted, and to practise so much disguise as may withdraw from too open notice the natural play of human feelings. By what right does a man display to another, in his very look of alienation and repulsion at his first introduction, that he dislikes him, or that he is doubtful whether he shall like him? Yet this is the too general movement of British sincerity. The play of feelings, the very flux and reflux of contending emotions, passes too

[1] Viz. in the word *improbus*. But so defective are all dictionaries that there is some difficulty in convincing scholars that the leading idea of *improbus*, its sole original idea, is—impudence, boldness, or audacity. Great is the incoherency and absurdity of learned men in questions of philology. Thus Heyne, in a vain attempt to make out (*consistently* to make out) the well-known words, "labor improbus omnia vincit," says that *improbus* means *pertinax*. How so? *Improbus* originally always has the meaning of *audacious*. Thus Pliny, speaking of the first catalogue of stars made by Hipparchus, calls it "labor etiam Deo improbus"—an enterprise audacious even for a superhuman being. Here is the very same word *labor* again qualified by the same epithet. And five hundred other cases might be adduced in which the sense of audacity, and that only, will unlock all, as by a master-key. Salmasius fancied (see his *De Pallio* of Tertullian) that the true idea was the *excessive* or *enormous*—whatever violated the common standards in any mode of disproportion.

nakedly, in the very act and process of introduction, under the eyes of the party interested. Frankness is good, honesty is good; but not a frankness, not an honesty which counteracts the very purposes of social meetings—for, unless he comes with the purpose of being pleased, why does a man come at all into meetings, not of business or necessity, but of relaxation and social pleasure?

From Sir H. Davy's conversation, which he carefully turned aside from his professional knowledge, nothing of importance was to be collected; he did not mean that there should. He meant to be a French talker—light, glancing, sparkling; and he was so. Upon the first occasion of my seeing him, I remember that he supported the peculiarly shallow hypothesis that climate was the great operating cause in determining national differences of all kinds—in the arts as well as in civil institutions. Apparently he did this with *malice prepense*, as a means of exciting Mr. Coleridge to talk by the provocation of shallowness. But he fought *imparibus armis* against Coleridge: the great boa-constrictor could not be roused into unfolding his coils; the monster was lethargic on this evening, as if he had recently swallowed a herd of goats and their horns. The fact was, as I afterwards found, that Coleridge did not like the brilliant manipulator and lecturer. Coleridge thought him effeminate, and (like many others at that time) ridiculed his lecturing "in white kid gloves," and adapting his experiments—that is, his public experiments at the Royal Institution—to the shallow and trivial taste of mere amateurs who happened to be in powerful stations. Still more, he complained of what he considered Davy's sycophancy and subservience to women of fashion and high rank. Coleridge assured me that Davy was much admired by various women of quality; and so enthusiastically by some that they would exclaim audibly at the public lecture-room—"Oh, those eyes! those brilliant eyes!" and that the philosopher was weak enough to be pleased with this homage.

Worse even than this, in Coleridge's eyes, was Davy's behaviour at fashionable dinner-tables, especially at Lord Darnley's, where the *élite* of the London *savans* and literati at that time congregated. Davy was charged, by many others

as well as Coleridge, with too much forgetting the dignity of science in such society, and too openly laying himself out to win favour or applause. "I could read in Lady Darnley's eyes," said Coleridge one day, when reporting an instance of Davy's suppleness in accommodating himself to a very great man's theory of *aeroliths*—"I could read plainly in Lady Darnley's eyes the very words—'I despise this man; this man is degrading himself wilfully.'" However, it must be remembered that Sir H. Davy had a much larger and readier introduction into fashionable society than Coleridge. To profess any one intelligible art or accomplishment, and in this one to have obtained an acknowledged or reputed pre-eminence, is a far better passport into privileged society than to have the largest intellectual pretensions of a less determinate class. The very narrowness of a man's claims, by making them definite and appreciable, is an advantage. Not merely a leader in a branch of art which presupposes a high sense of beauty, a cultivated taste, and other gifts properly intellectual, but even in some art presuming little beyond manual dexterity, is sure of his election into the exclusive circles. Not merely a painter, therefore, but a fiddler, provided only he be the first of his order—nay, I doubt not, a "chin-chopper" or Jews'-harp player, if only he happen to exceed all other chin-choppers or Jew-harpists—will find himself a privileged man in comparison with the philosopher, or the very largest and amplest intellect that ever nature endowed or education expanded. The advantage lies in doing a thing which has a name, an assignable name; and, the narrower is the art, the more appreciable are the degrees of merit in that art.

Now, it is the distinction, the being foremost, the place of *protagonist*, or Coryphæus in an art, which forms the ground of eligibility to that society which is *par excellence distingué*. An actor, therefore, beyond almost any other artist, except only the portrait painter, whose very craft is exercised in the society of its patrons, and cannot (unless partially) be otherwise exercised—an actor, I say, more easily than others, is admitted to graduate in such society, because his rank as an artist is more precisely ascertained by public reputation daily put to the test. Humiliating to any intellectual man, think-

ing haughtily of those pretensions, and standing upon no other title himself, is the collision which sometimes will befall him in aristocratic houses with actors even of a low order: for in behalf of such actors, supposing them to have comic talents for drollery, is sometimes suspended the general rule which demands first-rate excellence; fourth or fifth rate excellence on the stage being very compatible with superiority in convivial talents. Never shall I forget the wrath with which a London wit, who had indisputable powers of conversation, repeated the circumstances of a professional call which he made by appointment (for he was a lawyer) upon Y—ng, the tragic actor, who, in the absence of higher powers, then presided on the metropolitan stage. "Sir," said he, "in the room where I was left to cool my heels, until the great man should find himself disengaged for a person so inconsiderable as myself, there were strewed upon the table, for scenic effect, cards of invitation to dinner parties of grandee lords by the dozen, and to the balls, routs, soirées, and heaven knows what all, of countesses, ambassadresses, and duchesses by the score—ay, and all falling within a few days; more than ever I shall have in my whole life." Yet this man, who thus complained, was rather a brilliant "diner-out," as it is called.

Coleridge, as is notorious, whenever he happened to be in force, or even in artificial spirits, was even more than brilliant; to use a word too often abused and prostituted, he was even magnificent beyond all human standards; and a felicitous conversational specimen from him was sometimes the most memorable chapter in a man's whole intellectual experience through life. Yet this Coleridge was not in request, was not sought after in the aristocratic circles of London—to their shame be it said! He had just such introductions—such and so many—as would, if turned to account by a pushing, worldly man, have slipped him on sufferance into many more houses of the same distinction. An invitation more or less costs little to a woman of fashion; and he might have kept his ground, as many admitted *bores* do, upon toleration, in some two or three hundred great privileged mansions. Coleridge, however, had dignity of character sufficient to court no such distinctions; nor would

his spirits have been equal to the expense of labour requisite in so enormous a capital for a duty so widely dispersed. Neither do I overlook the fact that Mr. Coleridge's peculiar powers were not adapted to parties beyond the scale of a small dinner party. Yet still I contend that, for the honour of literature, and for the sake of expressing a public homage to the most majestic forms in which the intellect of the age expresses itself, and by way of conciliating the grace and sanction of Scholarship and authentic Philosophy to the circles of rank and wealth, upon the same principle which leads those same circles to court the inferior sanction and grace of Art, even in its lowest walks—for all these reasons, Coleridge should have been courted and wooed into such society.

I am not apt to praise the Continent at the expense of my own country; but here is an instance in which (generally speaking) the continental taste is better than ours. No great meeting is complete in Germany, in France, in Italy, unless the intellect of the land—its scholarship, its philosophy, its literature—be there by deputation: "the table is not full," unless these great leading interests are there represented. We inaugurate our wine cups by remembering the King's health; we inaugurate (let it not be thought profane to make such an allusion) our great civil transactions by prayer and remembrance of our highest relations: in reason, then, and by all analogy, we should inaugurate and legitimate, as it were, our meetings of festal pleasure by the presence of intellectual power and intellectual grace, as the ultimate sources upon which we should all be glad to have it thought that our pleasures depend. Aristocracy of Britain! be not careless of the philosophy and intellect of the age, lest it be thought that your pursuits and taste exist in alienation from both. Dr. Johnson had talked himself into being so much talked of that he—had he lived for another generation—would have become indispensable to fashionable parties. Coleridge, who, most assuredly, was far superior in creative power and fertility of new intuitions to Dr. Johnson, and immeasurably superior in the philosophic understanding (for, in direct philosophic speculation, Dr. Johnson never even attempted anything, except in one little pamphlet against

Soame Jenyns[1]), was scarcely beginning to be heard of amongst the higher circles of England when he died. The reason for comparing him with Dr. Johnson is on account of their common gifts of colloquial power.[2]

Did I not once hear a friend objecting to me such cases as that of Gibbon?—and, again, "Wordsworth," said he—"*him* I met at the Marchioness of Salisbury's party, at Canning's, at the English Ambassador's in Paris, and so forth." True; but Gibbon was a Member of Parliament, and in that capacity, not as a literary man, he had made his connexions. Wordsworth, again, was introduced to the great world by Sir George Beaumont, a powerful friend; for he had a large fortune, having no children, and stood midway as a connecting link between the world of art and the world of fashion. Most cases are liable to some personal or casual explanation of this sort where they seem to be exceptions to the general rule that commanding intellect is not peculiarly welcome in the most aristocratic circles; or, at least, not in anything like that proportion in which art, nay, the lowest branches of the lowest arts, are welcome; for *these* are absolutely courted. Actors, for seventy or eighty years back at the least, have formed a constituent part of the British aristocratic circles.

Yet it is amusing on this subject to recall the contra-

[1] The reference seems to be a review by Johnson, in the *Literary Magazine* (1756) of Soame Jenyns's "Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil." Boswell calls it "Johnson's most exquisite critical essay," and, in illustration of its great celebrity at the time, quotes this eulogium on Johnson for "his triumph over Jenyns"—

> "Though metaphysics spread the gloom of night,
> By reason's star he guides our aching sight,
> The bounds of knowledge marks, and points the way
> To pathless wastes where wildered sages stray,
> Where like a farthing link-boy Jenyns stands,
> And the dim torch drops from his feeble hands."—M.

[2] Three persons in all may be mentioned from the ranks of intellectual people who have had a footing in privileged society—I mean, not merely had an admission there, but a known and extensive acceptation. These three were—Lord Byron, Dr. Johnson, and Sir Walter Scott. Now, it is observable that the first was, in some sense, a denizen of such society in right of birth and rank; and of both the others it is remarkable that their passes were first countersigned by kings—Dr. Johnson's by George III, Sir Walter's by George IV.

dictory complaints of different parties, according to their different positions. Coleridge told me that Sir Humphry protested that a man had no chance of making himself a very distinguished person in the eyes of London society, unless he were a good House of Commons debater (and that had a look of truth about it) ; or, secondly, unless he had written a treatise on Greek lyric metres. "Ah, if I could say something now that was pretty and showy on Choriambic metre, or on the *Versus Dochmiaci!*" This was his sneering form of expression. On the other hand, at that very time, Dr. Parr, who could have written ably on some parts of philology, and Middleton, a friend of Coleridge's, and soon after Bishop of Calcutta, who *could* have written Greek lyric metre itself, as well as *on* Greek metre—both were apt to complain of the undue usurpation of chemistry and the kindred researches over the consecrated studies of our Universities. The plain truth was, that great distinction in either way led to all sorts of public honour in England. Mathematics is the sole unprotected and unprivileged branch of knowledge—except what goes under the name of metaphysics, that being absolutely proscribed—not so much without privilege or reward, as without toleration.

Davy was not a favourite with Coleridge ; and yet Coleridge, who grasped the whole philosophy of Chemistry perhaps better than any man except Schelling, admired him, and praised him much ; and often he went so far as to say that he might have been a great poet,—which perhaps few people will be disposed to think from the specimens he has left in the Bristol Anthology (edited in 2 vols., about the year 1799-1800, by Mr. Southey). But, however much he might admire this far-famed man, Coleridge did not at that time seem greatly to respect him. Once or twice he complained a little that Davy had been deficient in proper attentions to himself. In one of the cases alluded to, I suggested, which I believe really to have been the case, that Davy waited for Mr. Coleridge to make the first advances. But this Coleridge would not hear of. No, no, he said—Davy was the superior in social consideration—of *that* there could be no doubt—and to the superior belonged the initiatory act in any steps for proposing the relations on which

they were to stand. I do not mean, however, that Coleridge had much, or perhaps any, soreness on this point; for he was very forgiving in such cases. But he certainly looked with a disapproving eye on what he viewed at that time as suppleness and want of self-respect in Davy; and he also charged him with sensuality in eating. I know not whence Coleridge had his information; but he sometimes commented with asperity on Davy's luxuriousness in this particular; and he repeated, as if he knew it on some better authority than that of rumour—what rumour, however, plentifully buzzed about at that time—that Davy would sometimes sit down in solitary epicureanism to dishes which cost him half a guinea each or more. Even if it were so, many epicureans there are who would cry out, Is *that* all? And, whatever faults might be found in Davy at that time, I have reason to believe that time and philosophy did much to raise and strengthen his character in after years; for, as to foibles of physical temperament, a man must settle that account with his own conscience. For others it is really impertinent to complain. And perhaps the great temperance which Mr. Coleridge, as well as myself, practised through life, may have been due to advantages of organic structure or irritability of palate, as much as to philosophic self-command. At least for myself I can say that, though very few men indeed have maintained so simple and almost Hindooish a diet, I do not take much merit to myself for my forbearance; and I extend the largest indulgence of charitable construction to all men—except young ones, whose gamut of pleasures is wider—for seeking that irritation from a moderate sensuality which the flagging pulses of life no longer supply through other modes of excitement. Davy was then supposed to be making a fortune by some manufactory of gunpowder, from which he drew a large share of profit, not for capital contributed, or not for that originally, but for chemical secrets communicated. Soon afterwards he married a widow with a very large income (as much as £4000 a year by common report [1]); was made a baronet;

[1] Mrs. Apreece, widow of Shuckburgh A. Apreece, Esq., and daughter and heiress of Charles Kerr, Esq., of Kelso, a relative of Sir Walter Scott. The marriage was in 1812.—M.

was crowned with the laureateship of science, viz., the President's chair in the London Royal Society[1]; withdrew in consequence from further lecturing in kid gloves of any colour; drank moderately, as a man of elegant tastes, of the cup of human enjoyment; throve into a prosperous leader of a circle; sickened; travelled for health, unavailingly for himself, not altogether for others; died[2]; and left a name which, from the necessity of things, must grow fainter in its impression under each revolving sun, but which, at one time, was by much the most resounding name—the most splendid in the estimate of the *laity*, if not of the *clerus* in science—which has arisen since the days of Newton.

Mr. Godwin, of whom the reader will perhaps wish to hear more than of Sir H. Davy, was one of those eminent persons whom, unfortunately, I saw less of than perhaps any other lion of the times. He was in person a little man, with manners peculiarly tranquil, philosophic, and dignified—so at least I thought. I was greatly interested in all that related to this gentleman; not so much, not at all indeed, for his novels—which I do not profess to admire: and I am of opinion that, if Mr. Godwin himself had been asked the question searchingly, he would have acknowledged that I had seen a little into his constitution of mind, when I pronounce that, of all men who can ever have lived, he, by preference, must have found the labour most irksome of creating incidents, and making the narrative continue to move. Cocytus is not so stagnant or so sluggish in motion as the "Caleb Williams" in parts, and a later novel, whose name I forget (but turning upon the case of kidnapping an heir to an English estate, and carrying him to the Continent); and I would have consented to abide by an appeal to Mr. Godwin himself whether, to the last extremity of a soil parched up and arid, he had not felt the condition of his own mind when summoned to produce incidents. Is there anything disgraceful in this dearth of incident — this palsy of the

[1] In 1820.—M.

[2] At Geneva, 28th May 1829, *ætat.* 51. His widow survived till 1855.—M.

fable-creating[1] faculty? Far from it; *so* far from it that the powerful minds I have happened to know were certainly those who had least of it. The most powerful mind I have ever known had none of it—positively none. Shakspere, whom few men would disagree in making FIRST of human intellects, though double difficulties would arise as to who should be SECOND, and threefold difficulties as to who should be THIRD, and fourfold as to who should be FOURTH: well, Shakspere had, perhaps, as little of this power as most men who have had (like him) something of universal minds. Not, therefore, by any possibility, can it be supposed that I mean to disparage Mr. Godwin in charging him with this defect. And yet, in a newspaper, some months ago, I saw the novel of "Caleb Williams" called "*magnificent*"—a word which, as I have remarked elsewhere, is more than any other abused, from the hotbed excitement of the age; and, previously by some years, I saw a paper which, in other circumstances, might have moved laughter—a paper which compared and equalized Mr. Godwin, as a novelist, with Sir Walter Scott: but which, because I fancied that I saw in it the filial hand of a gifted writer, whom the whole world, from the east to the west, admires, was fitted by its very extravagance to draw tears on account of its piety. Involuntarily I thought of a paper which a German wife had written about her ugly husband (Herder), whom all others had admired, but whom she only thought proper to find handsome. But enough of what Mr. Godwin was *not*. I felt the nearest interest in this famous man on three separate accounts. *First*, as the husband of Mrs. Wolstonecraft.—What a woman! the sole rival in this country of the noblest of her sex, Madame Roland—the rival, I mean, in constitution of mind: would that she had glorified her life and end by the same self-sacrifices; which, under favouring circumstances, she was equally able to have done!—Next, I felt a profound interest in Mr. Godwin as the great *mormo*[2] set

[1] But I here take an opportunity of observing that to produce a fable (*i.e.* the outline or framework of a *nexus* of incidents) is not very difficult; the true difficulty is in making the fable move—in calling up the secondary incidents through which and by which this fable is to revolve.

[2] Greek for *hobgoblin*.—M.

up to terrify all England, some forty years ago, by two separate classes of enemies—by the "*panic-of-property* men," as Coleridge christened the party who rose in England under the terrors of the French "war against the palace, peace to the cottage"; and, secondly, by the antagonists of what was then called *French philosophy*, or *Modern philosophy*, or the philosophy of the *Illuminati*.

In two works of great circulation at that time, "Pilgrim Good Intent," and Miss Hamilton's novel, "Modern Philosophers," the two great moving agents are Dr. Priestley and Mr. Godwin. His connexion with Mrs. Wolstonecraft had completed what the first or 4to edition of his "Political Justice" had begun: the first edition, I say; for in the second the hypothesis which alarmed the "men of property" (as Mr. Hood has it) had been emasculated. Such was the awe inspired at that time by these shocks to public opinion, that most people felt of Mr. Godwin with the same alienation and horror as of a ghoul, or a bloodless vampyre, or the monster created by Frankenstein. It may be supposed that I had not shared in these thoughtless impressions; and yet, from the audacity of his speculations, I looked to see a loud, clamorous, and, perhaps, self-sufficient dogmatist; whereas the qualities most apparent on the surface of his manners were a gentle dignity of self-restraint and a tranquil benignity. I saw him, however, always under a cloud—that is, under the dust and confusion to the intellect of a large party, composed of what (by analogy to its slang use) might be termed a mob of literary *swells*. Once only I saw him in a smaller party, at the *Courier* Office—present, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Charles Lamb, Mr. Stewart, a proprietor of the *Courier*, and some four or five others. But, on this occasion, it happened,—which, perhaps, had not often happened before,—that neither Coleridge nor Wordsworth talked; Coleridge being more than usually out of spirits; Wordsworth fatigued by attending a dull debate in the House of Commons; Southey naturally indisposed to the exertions connected with colloquial duties; myself and others repressed by youth and reverence for our company. Thus it fell by accident to Charles Lamb to entertain the company, which he did in his happiest style, as a Diogenes with the

heart of a St. John; but nothing, as it happened, arose to call out the powers of Mr. Godwin. Though balked, therefore, of all fair occasion for measuring his colloquial calibre, I was not sorry to have gone off with an amended impression of the demeanour and general bearing to be naturally expected from revolutionary minds, and a personal redress given to the common partisan portrait circulated of one who had filled the mouth of declaimers for many a year, and become a byword or a commonplace of rhetoric for the schools.

In 1808, going up to London from Oxford, about May or June, in order to attend the marriage of a college friend, I met a lady of great conversational spirit—a Scottish lady, who, with her daughter, were the lions for that particular season in the higher circles of London; the mother for her wit, the daughter for her beauty. This was Mrs. Grant of Laggan—a valley or parish in the Scottish Highlands. The interest about her had been evoked for this particular winter of London by the quality of her introductions, and stimulated by the beauty of the daughter. But the permanent ground of it lay in her books; which, however, were thought below her conversation. Her visit was chiefly to the Bishop of London, whose palace she had just left at the time I met her, in order to fulfil some engagement to a city friend —the wife of a rich stockbroker; and there it was I had the honour of being presented to her. Her kindness to me was particularly flattering; and, to this day, I retain the impression of the benignity which she—an established wit, and just then receiving incense from all quarters—showed in her manners to me, a person utterly unknown. Once, however, she gave a rough assault to my deepest sensibilities. Either from myself or from somebody else she had learned my profound veneration for the poetry of Wordsworth. Upon this, she suddenly put a question to me upon the lines of Wordsworth on seeing a robin redbreast pursuing a butterfly. The particular passage which she selected was to this effect:—

> "If Father Adam could open his eyes,
> And see but this sight beneath the skies,
> He would wish to close them again."[1]

"Now," said Mrs. Grant, "what possible relation can Father Adam have to this case of the bird and the butterfly?" It must be mentioned here that the poem was not in the "Lyrical Ballads," by which originally Wordsworth had become known, but in a second collection which had but just issued from the press. The volumes had been in the public hands, if they could be said to have reached the public at all in those years, for about a fortnight; but in mine, who had only recently arrived in London, not above two days. Consequently, I had not seen the poem; and, being quite taken aback by such a question, in a dinner party made up of people who had either not heard of Wordsworth or heard of him only as an extravagant and feeble innovator, I believe that I made some absurd answer about Adam being possibly taken as a representative man, or representing the general sensibilities of human nature. Anything passes in company for a reason or an explanation, when people have not the demoniac passion for disputation; and Mrs. Grant accordingly bowed, in sign of acquiescence. I easily judged, however, that she could not have been satisfied; and in going home, with a strong feeling of self-reproach for having but ill sustained a poetic reputation for which I was so intensely jealous, I set myself to consider what *could* be the meaning for this connexion of Father Adam with the case; and, without having read the poem, by the light of so much as Mrs. Grant had quoted, instantly it flashed upon me that the secret reference must be to that passage in the "Paradise Lost" where Adam is represented—on the very next morning after his fatal transgression, and whilst yet in suspense as to the shape in which the dread consequences would begin to reveal themselves, and how soon begin—as lifting up his eyes, and seeing the first sad proof that all flesh was tainted, and that corruption had already travelled, by mysterious sympathy, through universal nature. The passage is most

[1] The lines, substantially in this form, but not quite, occur in the poem, of date 1806, which now appears in Wordsworth's works under the title "The Redbreast chasing the Butterfly."—M.

memorable, and can never be forgotten by one who has thoughtfully read it :—

> "The bird of Jove, stoop'd from his airy flight,
> Two birds of gayest plume before him drove ;
> Down from the hills the beast that reigns in woods,
> First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,
> Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind.
> *Adam observed* "——[1]

Here, then, we find that in Milton's representation of the Fall the very earliest—not the second or third, but positively the very first—outward signs by which Adam was made aware of a secret but awful revolution, which had gone like a whisper through all nature, was this very phenomenon of two animals pursuing in wrath others of more innocent and beautiful appearance. Reasonably, therefore, we may imagine, for the purposes of a poet, that, if Adam were permitted to open his eyes again upon this earthly scene of things, it would send a peculiar anguish through his thoughts to see renewed before him that very same image and manifestation of ruin by which his eyes had been met and his suspense had been resolved on the very first morning succeeding to his fall. The only question which could arise after this upon the propriety of Mr. Wordsworth's allusion was, Had he a right to presume in his readers such a knowledge of Milton? The answer to which is—that Milton is as much a presumable or presupposable book in the reference of a poet as nature herself and the common phenomena of nature. These a poet postulates or presupposes in his reader, and is entitled to do so. However, I mentioned the case afterwards to Mr. Wordsworth ; and, in consequence of what I then said, he added the note of reference to Milton which will be found in the subsequent editions.

Another, and hardly, perhaps, so excusable a mistake, had been made upon the very same poem by the *Edinburgh Review*. Mr. Wordsworth had noticed the household character of the redbreast and his consecration to the feelings of men in all Christian countries ; and this he had expressed by calling it

[1] *Paradise Lost*, XI, 185-191. De Quincey, quoting the lines from memory, gives them incompletely and somewhat incorrectly.—M.

"The bird whom by some name or other
All men who know thee *call their brother*"—

which passage the Reviewer had so little understood as to direct attention to it by italics. Yet the explanation was found in what immediately followed :—

"Their Thomas in Finland
And Russia far inland ;
The Peter of Norway boors." [1]

The bird is Robin with us in Britain, Thomas in another land, Peter in another, and so on. This was the explanation of what the Reviewer thought so absurd or inexplicable. To call a bird by a christian name *is*, in effect, when expressed by a poet, to "call him a brother" of man. And with equal ease might all the passages be explained which have hitherto been stumbling-blocks to critics, where at least the objection has arisen out of misconstruction of the sense.

Some years after this, I saw Mrs. Grant again in Edinburgh ; but grief was then heavy upon her : the fair-haired young lady, the "Scottish Beauty" of the London circles in 1808, had gone to an early grave ; and others of her family were expected to follow. Her "Letters from the Mountains" made a considerable impression at the time of its first appearance. But the work which interested me the most was that in which she painted her own early years as passed among the Anglo-Dutch of the New England States. It was a condition of society which had thus much of a paradisiacal condition—that none was "afore or after the other" ; no jealous precedencies ; no suspicions ; no spectacles of grinding poverty. Aristocracy there was none ; pauperism there was none ; and every member of the community saw a friend and a well-wisher in every other. Happy, happy state, in which were to be found

"No fears to beat away, no strife to heal" ;

a state which, with the expansion of civilization as it travels through American forests, may, for a century to come, be

[1] The quotations from the poem are again from memory, and somewhat incorrect. The last lines quoted do not follow the couplet, but precede it, in the original.—M.

continually renewed in those lands, but elsewhere I fear never more in this world.

I have been anticipating a little, and looking forward into years which I have not yet regularly reached. It may surprise a reader who has gone through the slight records of my life, to find me originally, as a boy, moving amongst the circles of the nobility, and now courting only those of intellectual people. The final resolution which led me into renouncing my connexions with ranks above my own arose upon the following occasion :—

On leaving school clandestinely, which I did some weeks before my seventeenth birthday, I went into Wales ; where I continued for months to walk about.[1] As long as I kept up any negotiation with my guardians, I received a regular allowance of a guinea a week. But upon this sum, not, however (as may be supposed), without great difficulty, I continued to obtain a bed, and some apology for supper, in the shape of coffee or tea, at the inns scattered about the Welsh valleys for the sake of the tourist. The old village inns had, till lately, charged the most primitive prices—sixpence, for example, had been the usual rate for a dinner, and so on ; but all this had very nearly disappeared under the great revolution of the times. War prices had arisen in the great markets ; a great influx of tourists and artists had begun to set in to the Welsh valleys ; elegant hotels arose on every side ; and the prices were pretty much as on the Bath road. Finding, therefore, that my three shillings a day did but little at these showy inns, more than the better half being at once exhausted upon a bed and the perquisites to "waiter," "chambermaid," and "boots," I came to the resolution of carrying a tent with me and sleeping out of doors. This tent, as may be imagined, was miserably small,—both to make it more portable, and also on account of the tent-pole, which, to avoid notice and trouble, was no more than a common walking-cane. I pitched my tent always on the lee-side of a hill ; and, in a land so solitary, and free from "high-viced" towns, I apprehended but little from any enemies, except the wild mountain cattle : these sometimes used to take umbrage

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 398.—M.

at my intrusion, and advance upon my encampment in the darkness, with what intentions I could not discover, nor perhaps did they know; but I lay in constant anxiety that some lumbering cow or other should break into my preserve, and poach her heavy foot into my face. This, however, was not the worst evil. I soon found the truth of Napoleon's criticism at St. Helena on a proposal made for improving the art of war by portable tents, treble-barrelled guns, &c.—that the practice of *bivouacking*, which offended so deeply the humanity of some philanthropic people, was in fact most favourable to the health of troops; and that, at most, a screen hung up to windward was the utmost protection from open air (or properly from the weather rather than the air) which is consistent with health. The loftier tents of the officers may be an exception; but mine, which resembled more the humbler and crowded tents of the privates, confirmed strikingly the medical objection of Napoleon. I soon found it necessary to resign it in that form; using it rather as a screen against wind, or, on a calm night, as a pillow. Selecting the ground well on such occasions, I found the advantage of this *sub dio* sleeping, in improved health; but, summer air and dry ground disappearing, I was at length obliged to seek other modes of lodging.

One morning, however, during the season when I practised it, I was sitting as yet undecided upon my day's movements, when a sound of wheels, as if rapidly approaching my own station, became audible. I rose and went forwards in the direction of the sound, with as much surprise as if "Gabriel's hounds" had been really approaching; for my idea was, that I had taken up my sleeping quarters on a wild moor remote from roads. A little ascent, and the turning of a knoll, showed me that in part I was right: a wild moor it was, but one which was traversed by the high road between Kerniogge and Llanrwst. A travelling carriage was advancing, and swept past me at the very moment when I touched the high road. The carriage seemed known to me; and on the panels I observed the coronet of a marquis; and, immediately after, I saw a head put out of the window, and looking at me until the downhill track and abrupt turns of the road hid me from sight. It was a natural conclusion

enough, this being the high road to Holyhead, that the carriage I had just seen might be that of my Irish friend, who had been created a marquis soon after I left Ireland;[1] and the face of the person who surveyed me so keenly doubtless one of his household, knowing me better than I knew her. Great was my joy at this probability; and, without delay, I struck my tent and walked to Llanrwst. The distance proved to be six miles; and on my arrival the bird was flown. I went into the stable-yard, and inquired earnestly of a group just fresh from attending to the horses recently come in—"Who was the last traveller?" All remembered that it was a lord, and that it was a marquis. "Was it the Marquis of S——?" "Yes: that was the very title," several voices answered; "and he would stop for dinner at Conway." Thither I resolved to pursue; and, for that purpose, went into the house. Luckily, the landlord was able to inform me that the noble marquis was not my friend, but Lord Bath. And, by this timely information, I was saved from the very awkward embarrassment of finding myself at Conway with a chaise and four to pay, and no money at my command. The momentary evil was past. But the sort of danger I had escaped, of finding myself viewed by the inn at Conway as a fraudulent tourist, threw me powerfully on considering what had been my motive for pursuing the party, supposing even that it *had* been Lord S——. What would have come of it? He would naturally have been pleased to see me, as everybody is pleased to see old friends after a long interval; he would have asked me to dine with him; and, supposing a vacant seat in his carriage, he would have asked me to go along with him to Holyhead or Dublin. But, even so, he would not have particularly admired my call on his purse for a chaise and four. Next I went on to ask myself—What if all this were conceded, and it should happen that he really *was* pleased, and wishing for my company to Dublin—upon what principles or views did I mean to cultivate a connexion of this sort? Boyish years stood upon other grounds; but, on coming to an accountable age, I

[1] De Quincey's former Irish host, the Earl of Altamont, the father of his boy-friend Lord Westport. The earl had become Marquis of Sligo in 1800. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 398.—M.

knew that everywhere sprung up an impertinent question as to a young man's future destination. Up to sixteen or fifteen, a boy is ranked upon the footing of his father's rank. After that time, his rank is deduced *proleptically* from the probable stations which he will hold in future times. Now, if my object was to make myself a trading Member of Parliament, certainly the connexions which I had with ministerial noblemen would be of use. Through them, a borough might be had; and, that obtained, all was done for a man which he could owe to fortune—the rest depended upon himself. But, supposing that *personally* there should be no objections, still I had seen enough of borough-disposers to know that they were not willing to give, without a consideration, something more than that of support to a particular line of politics. Lord S—— in particular, who in those days had some borough interest, looked upon it as "bespoke" for family connexions. And so of others. But the most signal bar to all this was my own grievous disinclination to any mode of public, or noisy, or contentious life. Peace, liberty to think, solitude—these were the cravings of my heart. And, unless I went among the nobility in the character of a demanding, insolent claimant, I knew that I had better not go at all. Inevitably the question arises—Upon what footing is this man here? Is it his natural station? No: then at least he is an interloper; and the chances are that he is a toad-eater and sycophant. Suppose he is *not*—yet the known presumption that he is (a presumption of which he cannot be unaware) loads him with almost the worst reproaches of the reality. He is no sycophant; yet he is willing to stand the presumption that he is, and the consequent contempt—— For what? Every way, I saw that my own dignity, which above all things a man should scrupulously maintain, required that I should no longer go into any circles where I did not stand on my own native footing—*proprio jure*. Many a time had I wondered at the false conceptions of dignity which could lead Addison to think himself elevated by marriage with Lady Warwick—a husband to seek protection, as it were, from a wife! What had been abundantly right for me as a boy ceased to be right for me when I ceased to be a boy.

CHAPTER II

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHARLES LAMB[1]

AMONGST the earliest literary acquaintances I made was that with the inimitable Charles Lamb: inimitable, I say, but the word is too limited in its meaning; for, as is said of Milton in that well-known life of him attached to all common editions of the "Paradise Lost" (Fenton's, I think), "in both senses he was above imitation." Yes; it was as impossible to the moral nature of Charles Lamb that he should imitate another as, in an intellectual sense, it was impossible that any other should successfully imitate him. To write with patience even, not to say genially, for Charles Lamb it was a very necessity of his constitution that he should write from his own wayward nature; and that nature was so peculiar that no other man, the ablest at mimicry, could counterfeit its voice. But let me not anticipate; for these were opinions about Lamb which I had not when I first knew him, nor could have had by any reasonable title. "Elia," be it observed, the exquisite "Elia," was then unborn; Lamb had as yet published nothing to the world which proclaimed him in his proper character of a most original man of genius[2]: at

[1] From *Tait's Magazine* for April and June 1838.—M.

[2] "*Man of genius*"... "*man of talent*":—I have, in another place, laid down what I conceive to be the true ground of distinction between *genius* and *talent;* which lies mainly in this—that genius is intellectual power impregnated with the *moral* nature, and expresses a synthesis of the active in man with his original organic capacity of pleasure and pain. Hence the very word *genius*, because the *genial* nature in its whole organization is expressed and involved in it. Hence, also,

best, he could have been thought no more than a man of talent—and of talent moving in a narrow path, with a power rather of mimicking the quaint and the fantastic than any large grasp over catholic beauty. And, therefore, it need not offend the most doting admirer of Lamb as he is *now* known to us, a brilliant star for ever fixed in the firmament of English Literature, that I acknowledge myself to have sought his acquaintance rather under the reflex honour he had enjoyed of being known as Coleridge's friend than for any which he yet held directly and separately in his own person. My earliest advances towards this acquaintance had an inauspicious aspect; and it may be worth while reporting the circumstances, for they were characteristic of Charles Lamb; and the immediate result was—that we parted, not perhaps (as Lamb says of his philosophic friend R. and the Parisians) "with mutual contempt," but at least with coolness; and, on my part, with something that might have even turned to disgust—founded, however, entirely on my utter misapprehension of Lamb's character and his manners—had it not been for the winning goodness of Miss Lamb, before which all resentment must have melted in a moment.

It was either late in 1804 or early in 1805, according to my present computations, that I had obtained from a literary friend a letter of introduction to Mr. Lamb. All that I knew of his works was his play of "John Woodvil," which I had bought in Oxford, and perhaps *I* only had bought throughout that great University, at the time of my matriculation there, about the Christmas of 1803. Another book fell into my hands on that same morning, I recollect—the "Gebir" of Mr. Walter Savage Landor, which astonished me by the splendour of its descriptions (for I had opened accidentally upon the sea-nymph's marriage with Tamor, the youthful

arises the reason that genius is always peculiar and individual; one man's genius never exactly repeats another man's. But talent is the same in all men; and that which is effected by talent can never serve to identify or indicate its author. Hence, too, that, although talent is the object of respect, it never conciliates love; you love a man of talent perhaps *in concreto*, but not talent; whereas genius, even for itself, is idolized. I am the more proud of this distinction since I have seen the utter failure of Mr. Coleridge, judging from his attempt in his "Table-Talk."

brother of Gebir)—and I bought this also. Afterwards, when placing these two most unpopular of books on the same shelf with the other far holier idols of my heart, the joint poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge as then associated in the "Lyrical Ballads"—poems not equally unknown, perhaps a *little* better known, but only with the result of being more openly scorned, rejected—I could not but smile internally at the fair prospect I had of congregating a library which no man had read but myself. "John Woodvil" I had almost studied, and Miss Lamb's pretty "High-Born Helen," and the ingenious imitations of Burton; these I had read, and, to a certain degree, must have admired, for some parts of them had settled without effort in my memory. I had read also the *Edinburgh* notice of them; and with what contempt may be supposed from the fact that my veneration for Wordsworth transcended all that I felt for any created being, past or present; insomuch that, in the summer, or spring rather, of that same year, and full eight months before I first went to Oxford, I had ventured to address a letter to him, through his publishers, the Messrs. Longman (which letter, Miss Wordsworth in after years assured me they believed to be the production of some person much older than I represented myself), and that in due time I had been honoured by a long answer from Wordsworth; an honour which, I well remember, kept me awake, from mere excess of pleasure, through a long night in June 1803. It was not to be supposed that the very feeblest of admirations could be shaken by mere scorn and contumely, unsupported by any shadow of a reason. Wordsworth, therefore, could not have suffered in any man's opinion from the puny efforts of this new autocrat amongst reviewers; but what was said of Lamb, though not containing one iota of criticism, either good or bad, had certainly more point and cleverness. The supposition that "John Woodvil" might be a lost drama, recovered from the age of Thespis, and entitled to the hircus, &c., must, I should think, have won a smile from Lamb himself; or why say "Lamb himself," which means "*even* Lamb," when he would have been the *very* first to laugh (as he was afterwards among the first to hoot at his own farce), provided only he could detach his mind from the ill-nature and hard contempt which accom-

panied the wit. This wit had certainly not dazzled my eyes in the slightest degree. So far as I was left at leisure by a more potent order of poetry to think of the "John Woodvil" at all, I had felt and acknowledged a delicacy and tenderness in the situations as well as the sentiments, but disfigured, as I thought, by quaint, grotesque, and *mimetic* phraseology. The main defect, however, of which I complained, was defect of power. I thought Lamb had no right to take his station amongst the inspired writers who had just then risen to throw new blood into our literature, and to breathe a breath of life through the worn-out, or, at least, torpid organization of the national mind. He belonged, I thought, to the old literature; and, as a poet, he certainly does. There were in his verses minute scintillations of genius—now and then, even a subtle sense of beauty; and there were shy graces, lurking half-unseen, like violets in the shade. But there was no power on a colossal scale; no breadth; no choice of great subjects; no wrestling with difficulty; no creative energy. So I thought then; and so I should think now, if Lamb were viewed chiefly as a poet. Since those days he has established his right to a seat in any company. But why? and in what character? As "Elia": —the essays of "Elia" are as exquisite a gem amongst the jewellery of literature as any nation can show. They do not, indeed, suggest to the typifying imagination a Last Supper of Da Vinci or a Group from the Sistine Chapel; but they suggest some exquisite cabinet painting; such, for instance, as that Carlo Dolce known to all who have visited Lord Exeter's place of Burleigh (by the way, I bar the allusion to *Charles* Lamb which a shameless punster suggests in the name *Carlo Dolce*); and in this also resembling that famous picture—that many critics (Hazlitt amongst others) can see little or nothing in it. *Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum!* Those, therefore, err, in my opinion who present Lamb to our notice amongst the poets. Very pretty, very elegant, very tender, very beautiful verses he has written; nay, twice he has written verses of extraordinary force, almost demoniac force—viz., "The Three Graves," and "The Gipsy's Malison." But, speaking generally, he writes verses as one to whom that function was a secondary and occasional

function, not his original and natural vocation,—not an ἔργον, but a πάρεργον.

For the reasons, therefore, I have given, never thinking of Charles Lamb as a poet, and, at that time, having no means for judging of him in any other character, I had requested the letter of introduction to him rather with a view to some further knowledge of Coleridge (who was then absent from England) than from any special interest about Lamb himself. However, I felt the extreme discourtesy of approaching a man and asking for his time and civility under such an avowal: and the letter, therefore, as I believe, or as I requested, represented me in the light of an admirer. I hope it did; for that character might have some excuse for what followed, and heal the unpleasant impression likely to be left by a sort of *fracas* which occurred at my first meeting with Lamb. This was so characteristic of Lamb that I have often laughed at it since I came to know what *was* characteristic of Lamb.

But first let me describe my brief introductory call upon him at the India House. I had been told that he was never to be found at home except in the evenings; and to have called then would have been, in a manner, forcing myself upon his hospitalities, and at a moment when he might have confidential friends about him; besides that, he was sometimes tempted away to the theatres. I went, therefore, to the India House; made inquiries amongst the servants; and, after some trouble (for *that* was early in his Leadenhall Street career, and possibly he was not much known), I was shown into a small room, or else a small section of a large one (thirty-four years affects one's remembrance of some circumstances), in which was a very lofty writing-desk, separated by a still higher railing from that part of the floor on which the profane—the laity, like myself—were allowed to approach the *clerus*, or clerkly rulers of the room. Within the railing sat, to the best of my remembrance, six quill-driving gentlemen; not gentlemen whose duty or profession it was merely to drive the quill, but who were then driving it—*gens de plume*, such *in esse*, as well as *in posse*—in act as well as habit; for, as if they supposed me a spy sent by some superior power to report upon the situation of affairs as sur-

prised by me, they were all too profoundly immersed in their oriental studies to have any sense of my presence. Consequently, I was reduced to a necessity of announcing myself and my errand. I walked, therefore, into one of the two open doorways of the railing, and stood closely by the high stool of him who occupied the first place within the little aisle. I touched his arm, by way of recalling him from his lofty Leadenhall speculations to this sublunary world; and, presenting my letter, asked if that gentleman (pointing to the address) were really a citizen of the present room; for I had been repeatedly misled, by the directions given me, into wrong rooms. The gentleman smiled; it was a smile not to be forgotten. This was Lamb. And here occurred a *very, very* little incident—one of those which pass so fugitively that they are gone and hurrying away into Lethe almost before your attention can have arrested them; but it was an incident which, to me, who happened to notice it, served to express the courtesy and delicate consideration of Lamb's manners. The seat upon which he sat was a very high one; so absurdly high, by the way, that I can imagine no possible use or sense in such an altitude, unless it were to restrain the occupant from playing truant at the fire by opposing Alpine difficulties to his descent.

Whatever might be the original purpose of this aspiring seat, one serious dilemma arose from it, and this it was which gave the occasion to Lamb's act of courtesy. Somewhere there is an anecdote, meant to illustrate the ultra-obsequiousness of the man,—either I have heard of it in connexion with some actual man known to myself, or it is told in a book of some historical coxcomb,—that, being on horseback, and meeting some person or other whom it seemed advisable to flatter, he actually dismounted, in order to pay his court by a more ceremonious bow. In Russia, as we all know, this was, at one time, upon meeting any of the Imperial family, an act of legal necessity: and there, accordingly, but there only, it would have worn no ludicrous aspect. Now, in this situation of Lamb's, the act of descending from his throne, a very elaborate process, with steps and stages analogous to those on horseback—of slipping your right foot out of the stirrup, throwing your leg over the crupper, &c.—was, to

all intents and purposes, the same thing as dismounting from a great elephant of a horse. Therefore it both was, and was felt to be by Lamb, supremely ludicrous. On the other hand, to have sate still and stately upon this aerial station, to have bowed condescendingly from this altitude, would have been—not ludicrous indeed; performed by a very superb person, and supported by a very superb bow, it might have been vastly fine, and even terrifying to many young gentlemen under sixteen; but it would have had an air of ungentlemanly assumption. Between these extremes, therefore, Lamb had to choose;—between appearing ridiculous himself for a moment, by going through a ridiculous evolution which no man could execute with grace; or, on the other hand, appearing lofty and assuming, in a degree which his truly humble nature (for he was the humblest of men in the pretensions which he put forward for himself) must have shrunk from with horror. Nobody who knew Lamb can doubt how the problem was solved: he began to dismount instantly; and, as it happened that the very first *round* of his descent obliged him to turn his back upon me as if for a sudden purpose of flight, he had an excuse for laughing; which he did heartily—saying, at the same time something to this effect: that I must not judge from first appearances; that he should revolve upon me; that he was not going to fly; and other facetiæ, which challenged a general laugh from the clerical brotherhood.

When he had reached the basis of terra firma on which I was standing, naturally, as a mode of thanking him for his courtesy, I presented my hand; which, in a general case, I should certainly not have done; for I cherished, in an ultra-English degree, the English custom (a wise custom) of bowing in frigid silence on a first introduction to a stranger; but, to a man of literary talent, and one who had just practised so much kindness in my favour at so probable a hazard to himself of being laughed at for his pains, I could not maintain that frosty reserve. Lamb took my hand; did not absolutely reject it: but rather repelled my advance by his manner. This, however, long afterwards I found, was only a habit derived from his too great sensitiveness to the variety of people's feelings, which run through a gamut so infinite of

degrees and modes as to make it unsafe for any man who respects himself to be too hasty in his allowances of familiarity. Lamb had, as he was entitled to have, a high self-respect; and me he probably suspected (as a young Oxonian) of some aristocratic tendencies. The letter of introduction, containing (I imagine) no matters of business, was speedily run through; and I instantly received an invitation to spend the evening with him. Lamb was not one of those who catch at the chance of escaping from a bore by fixing some distant day, when accidents (in duplicate proportion, perhaps, to the number of intervening days) may have carried you away from the place: he sought to benefit by no luck of that kind; for he was, with his limited income—and I say it deliberately—positively the most hospitable man I have known in this world. That night, the same night, I was to come and spend the evening with him. I had gone to the India House with the express purpose of accepting whatever invitation he should give me; and, therefore, I accepted this, took my leave, and left Lamb in the act of resuming his aerial position.

I was to come so early as to drink tea with Lamb; and the hour was seven. He lived in the Temple; and I, who was not then, as afterwards I became, a student and member of "the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple," did not know much of the localities. However, I found out his abode, not greatly beyond my time: nobody had been asked to meet me,—which a little surprised me, but I was glad of it; for, besides Lamb, there was present his sister, Miss Lamb, of whom, and whose talents and sweetness of disposition, I had heard. I turned the conversation, upon the first opening which offered, to the subject of Coleridge; and many of my questions were answered satisfactorily, because seriously, by Miss Lamb. But Lamb took a pleasure in baffling me, or in throwing ridicule upon the subject. Out of this grew the matter of our affray. We were speaking of "The Ancient Mariner." Now, to explain what followed, and a little to excuse myself, I must beg the reader to understand that I was under twenty years of age, and that my admiration for Coleridge (as, in perhaps a still greater degree, for Wordsworth) was literally in no respect short of a religious feeling:

it had, indeed, all the sanctity of religion, and all the tenderness of a human veneration. Then, also, to imagine the strength which it would derive from circumstances that do not exist now, but did then, let the reader further suppose a case—not such as he may have known since that era about Sir Walter Scotts and Lord Byrons, where every man you could possibly fall foul of, early or late, night or day, summer or winter, was in perfect readiness to feel and express his sympathy with the admirer—but when no man, beyond one or two in each ten thousand, had so much as heard of either Coleridge or Wordsworth, and that one, or those two, knew them only to scorn them, trample on them, spit upon them. Men so abject in public estimation, I maintain, as that Coleridge and that Wordsworth, had not existed before, have not existed since, will not exist again. We have heard in old times of donkeys insulting effete or dying lions by kicking them; but in the case of Coleridge and Wordsworth it was effete donkeys that kicked living lions. They, Coleridge and Wordsworth, were the Pariahs of literature in those days: as much scorned wherever they were known; but escaping that scorn only because they were as little known as Pariahs, and even more obscure.

Well, after this bravura, by way of conveying my sense of the real position then occupied by these two authors—a position which thirty and odd years have altered, by a revolution more astonishing and total than ever before happened in literature or in life—let the reader figure to himself the sensitive horror with which a young person, carrying his devotion about with him, of necessity, as the profoundest of secrets, like a primitive Christian amongst a nation of Pagans, or a Roman Catholic convert amongst the bloody idolaters of Japan—in Oxford, above all places, hoping for no sympathy, and feeling a daily grief, almost a shame, in harbouring this devotion to that which, nevertheless, had done more for the expansion and sustenance of his own inner mind than all literature besides—let the reader figure, I say, to himself, the shock with which such a person must recoil from hearing the very friend and associate of these authors utter what seemed at that time a burning ridicule of all which belonged to them —their books, their thoughts, their places, their persons.

This had gone on for some time before we came upon the ground of "The Ancient Mariner"; I had been grieved, perplexed, astonished; and how else could I have felt reasonably, knowing nothing of Lamb's propensity to mystify a stranger; he, on the other hand, knowing nothing of the depth of my feelings on these subjects, and that they were not so much mere literary preferences as something that went deeper than life or household affections? At length, when he had given utterance to some ferocious canon of judgment, which seemed to question the entire value of the poem, I said, perspiring (I dare say) in this detestable crisis—"But, Mr. Lamb, good heavens! how is it possible you can allow yourself in such opinions? What instance could you bring from the poem that would bear you out in these insinuations?" "Instances!" said Lamb: "oh, I'll instance you, if you come to that. Instance, indeed! Pray, what do you say to this—

> 'The many men so beautiful,
> And they all dead did lie'?[1]

So beautiful, indeed! Beautiful! Just think of such a gang of Wapping vagabonds, all covered with pitch, and chewing tobacco; and the old gentleman himself—what do you call him?—the bright-eyed fellow?" What more might follow I never heard; for, at this point, in a perfect rapture of horror, I raised my hands—both hands—to both ears; and, without stopping to think or to apologize, I endeavoured to restore equanimity to my disturbed sensibilities by shutting out all further knowledge of Lamb's impieties. At length he seemed to have finished; so I, on my part, thought I might venture to take off the embargo: and in fact he *had* ceased; but no sooner did he find me restored to my hearing than he said with a most sarcastic smile—which he could assume upon occasion—"If you please, sir, we'll say grace before we begin." I know not whether Lamb were really piqued or not at the mode by which I had expressed my disturbance: Miss Lamb certainly was not; her goodness led her to pardon me, and to treat me—in whatever light she might really view my almost involuntary rudeness—as the

[1] From one of the stanzas in Part IV of *The Ancient Mariner*.—M.

party who had suffered wrong; and, for the rest of the evening, she was so pointedly kind and conciliatory in her manner that I felt greatly ashamed of my boyish failure in self-command. Yet, after all, Lamb necessarily appeared so much worse, in my eyes, as a traitor is worse than an open enemy.

Lamb, after this one visit—not knowing at that time any particular reason for continuing to seek his acquaintance—I did not trouble with my calls for some years. At length, however, about the year 1808, and for the six or seven following years, in my evening visits to Coleridge, I used to meet him again; not often, but sufficiently to correct altogether the very false impression I had received of his character and manners. I have elsewhere described him as a "Diogenes with the heart of a St. John"—where, by the way, the reader must not, by laying the accent falsely on St. John, convert it into the name of Lord Bolingbroke[1]: I meant St. John the Evangelist. And, by ascribing to Lamb any sort of resemblance to Diogenes, I had a view only to his plain speaking in the first place—his unequalled freedom from every mode of hypocrisy or affectation; and, secondly, to his talent for saying keen, pointed things, sudden flashes, or revelations of hidden truths, in a short condensed form of words. In fact, the very foundation of Lamb's peculiar character was laid in his absolute abhorrence of all affectation. This showed itself in self-disparagement of every kind; never the mock disparagement which is self-praise in an indirect form, as when people accuse themselves of all the virtues by professing an inability to pay proper attention to prudence or economy—or uncontrollable disposition to be rash and inconsiderate on behalf of a weaker party when suffering apparent wrong. But Lamb's confessions of error, of infirmity, were never at any time acts of mock humility, meant to involve oblique compliment in the rebound. Thus, he honestly and frankly confessed his blank insensibility to music.

> "King David's harp, that made the madness flee
> From Saul, had been but a Jew's harp to me,"

[1] The English pronunciation of Lord Bolingbroke's family name *St. John* is *Sinjohn*, as in the Scottish *Sinclair* for *St. Clair*. So in Pope's first line in his *Essay on Man*—

"Awake, my St. John! leave all meaner things."—M.

is his plain, unvarnished admission, in verses admirable for their wit and their elegance: nor did he attempt to break the force of this unfortunate truth by claiming,—which, perhaps, he might have claimed,—a compensatory superiority in the endowments of his eye. It happened to him, as I believe it has often done to others—to Pope, perhaps, but certainly to Wordsworth—that the imperfect structure or imperfect development of the ear, denying any profound sensibility to the highest modes of impassioned music, has been balanced by a more than usual sensibility to some modes of visual beauty. With respect to Wordsworth, it has been doubted, by some of his friends, upon very good grounds, whether, as a connoisseur in painting, he has a very learned eye, or one that can be relied upon. I hold it to be very doubtful, also, whether Wordsworth's judgment in the human face—its features and its expression—be altogether sound, and in conformity to the highest standards of art. But it is undeniable—and must be most familiar to all who have associated upon intimate terms with Wordsworth and his sister—that they both derive a pleasure, originally and organically more profound than is often witnessed, both from the forms and the colouring of rural nature. The very same tests by which I recognise my own sensibility to music as rising above the common standard—viz., by the indispensableness of it to my daily comfort, the readiness with which I make any sacrifices to obtain a "grand debauch" of this nature, &c. &c.—these, when applied to Wordsworth, manifest him to have an analogous craving, in a degree much transcending the general ratio, for the luxuries of the eye. These luxuries Wordsworth seeks in their great original exemplar—in Nature as exhibiting herself amongst the bold forms and the rich but harmonious colouring of mountainous scenery; there especially, where the hand of injudicious art, or of mercenary craft, has not much interfered, with monotonous repetition of unmeaning forms with offensive outlines, or, still more, with harsh and glaring contrasts of colour. The offence which strikes upon Wordsworth's eye from such disfigurations of nature is, really and without affectation, as keen, as intense, and as inevitable as to other men the pain to the mere physical eye-sight from the glare of snow or the irritations of

flying dust. Lamb, on the other hand, sought his pleasures of this class—not, as by this time all the world knows, in external nature, for which it was his pleasure to profess not merely an indifference, but even a horror which it delighted him to exaggerate with a kind of playful malice to those whom he was hoaxing—but in the works of the great painters: and for these I have good reason to think that both he and his sister had a peculiarly deep sensibility, and, after long practice, a fine and matured taste. Here, then, was both a gift and an attainment which Lamb might have fairly pleaded in the way of a set-off to his acknowledged defects of ear. But Lamb was too really and sincerely humble ever to think of nursing and tending his own character in any man's estimation, or of attempting to blunt the effect of his own honest avowals of imperfection by dexterously playing off before your eyes some counterbalancing accomplishment. He was, in fact, as I have said before, the most humble and unpretending of human beings, the most thoroughly sincere, the most impatient of either simulation or dissimulation, and the one who threw himself the most unreservedly for your good opinion upon the plain natural expression of his real qualities, as nature had forced them, without artifice, or design, or disguise, more than you find in the most childlike of children.

There was a notion prevalent about Lamb, which I can affirm to have been a most erroneous one: it was—that any flagrant act of wickedness formed a recommendation to his favour. "Ah!" said one man to me, when asking a letter of introduction from him—"ah! that I could but recommend you as a man that had robbed the mail, or the King's exchequer—which would be better. In that case, I need not add a word; you would take rank instantly amongst the privileged friends of Lamb, without a word from me." Now, as to "*the King's Exchequer*," I cannot say. A man who should have placed himself in relation with Falstaff by obeying his commands[1] at a distance of four centuries (like the traveller who demanded of the turnpikeman—"How do you like your eggs dressed?" and, ten years after, on passing the same gate, received the monosyllabic reply—*poached*), that

[1] "Rob me thy father's exchequer."—*Falstaff, in Henry IV, Part 1st.*

man might have presented irresistible claims to Lamb's affection. Shakspere, or anything connected with Shakspere, might have proved too much for his Roman virtue. But, putting aside any case so impossible as this, I can affirm that—so far from this being the truth, or approaching the truth—a rule the very opposite governed Lamb's conduct. So far from welcoming wicked, profligate, or dissolute people by preference, if they happened to be clever—he bore with numerous dull people, stupid people, asinine people, for no other reason upon earth than because he knew them, or believed them, to have been ill-used or oppressed by some clever but dissolute man. That was enough. Sufficient it was that they had been the objects of injustice, calumny, persecution, or wrong in any shape—and, without further question, they had "their place allowed" at Lamb's fireside. I knew some eminent instances of what I am now saying. And I used to think to myself, Were this feature of Lamb's character made known, and the natural results followed, what would he do? Refuse anybody, reject anybody, tell him to begone, he could not, no more than he could have danced upon his mother's grave. He would have received all who presented themselves with any rational pretensions, and would finally have gone to prison rather than reject anybody. I do not say this rhetorically. I knew Lamb; and I know certain cases in which he was concerned —cases which it is difficult to publish with any regard to the feelings of persons now living, but which (if published in all their circumstances) would show him to be the very noblest of human beings. He was a man, in a sense more eminent than would be conceivable by many people, *princely*—nothing short of that—in his beneficence. Many liberal people I have known in this world—many who were charitable in the widest sense—many munificent people; but never any one upon whom, for bounty, for indulgence and forgiveness, for charitable construction of doubtful or mixed actions, and for regal munificence, you might have thrown yourself with so absolute a reliance as upon this comparatively poor Charles Lamb. Considered as a man of genius, he was not in the very first rank, simply because his range was a contracted one: within that range, he was perfect; of the peculiar powers which he possessed he has left to the world as exquisite a

specimen as this planet is likely to exhibit. But, as a *moral* being, in the total compass of his relations to this world's duties, in the largeness and diffusiveness of his charity, in the graciousness of his condescension to inferior intellects, I am disposed, after a deliberate review of my own entire experience, to pronounce him the best man, the nearest in his approaches to an ideal standard of excellence, that I have known or read of. In the mingled purity—a childlike purity—and the benignity of his nature, I again express my own deep feeling of the truth, when I say that he recalled to my mind the image and character of St. John the Evangelist—of him who was at once the beloved apostle, and also, more peculiarly, the apostle of love. Well and truly, therefore, did the poet say, in his beautiful lines upon this man's grave and memory [1]—

"Oh, he was good, if e'er a good man lived!" [2]

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[1] Wordsworth, in his poem of 1835, entitled *Written after the Death of Charles Lamb.*—M.

[2] One feature there was in Lamb's charity which is but too frequently found wanting amongst the most liberal and large-hearted of the charitable, and especially where the natural temper is melancholy or desponding—one, moreover, which, beyond any other aspect of charity, wears a winning grace—one, finally, which is indistinctly pointed out as a *duty* in our scriptural code of ethics: the habit of *hoping* cheerfully and kindly on behalf of those who were otherwise objects of moral blame. Lamb, if anybody, plagued as he was by a constitutional taint of morbid melancholy, might have been privileged to fail in this duty; but he did not. His goodness, making it too painful to him to cherish as *final* conclusions any opinions with regard to any individual which seemed to shut him out from the sympathy or the brotherly feeling of the just and good, overpowered the acuteness of his discernment; and, where it was quite impossible to find matter of approbation in the past or the present conduct, he would turn to the future for encouraging views of amendment, and would insist upon regarding what was past as the accidental irregularity, the anomaly, the exception, warranting no inferences with regard to what remained; and (whenever that was possible) would charge it all upon unfortunate circumstances. Everybody must have felt the profound pathos of that passage in Scripture—"*Let him that stole, steal no more*"; a pathos which rests evidently upon the sudden substitution for a judicial sentence proportioned to the offence (such as an ordinary lawgiver would have uttered, and such as the listener anticipates) of a heavenly light opened upon the guilty heart, showing to it a hope and an escape, and whispering that for itself also there may be final peace

Perhaps the foundation for the false notion I have mentioned about Lamb's predilections was to be found in his carelessness for those social proscriptions which have some-

in reversion, where otherwise all had seemed blank despair and the darkness of coming vengeance. The poor benighted Pariah of social life—who durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, and, by the angry tone of human laws, as well as of society in general, finds but too much that disposes him to despond, and perhaps makes no effort, merely because all efforts seem likely to be unavailing—will often, in the simple utterance of a cheerful hope on his behalf, see as it were a window opening in heaven, and faces radiant with promise looking out upon him. These words I mean to apply as the distinguishing description of Christian ethics, as contrasted with all other ethical theories. For it is a just inquiry with respect to any system of morals—not merely, What are your substantial doctrines, what is the *corpus* of your laws?—but also, What is your preparatory discipline? —what are the means at your disposal for winning over the reluctant disciple, the bold recusant, or the timid doubter? And it is worthy of remark that, in this case of hoping on behalf of those who did seem no just objects of hope, the very same absence of all compromise with human infirmity is found which a distinguished German infidel described as the great distinction of Christianity, and one which raised it *primâ facie* above all other codes of morality. There is indeed a descent—a condescension to humanity and its weakness; but no shadow of a compromise, a capitulation, or what in Roman law is called a "transaction" with it. For, said Immanuel Kant, here lies the point:—The Stoic maintains the moral principle in its ideal purity; he sacrifices nothing at all to human weakness: and so far he deserves praise. But then, for that same reason, he is useless: his standard is exalted beyond all human reproach. On the other hand, the Epicurean relaxes so far as to make *his* method of "holiness" attainable. But how? It is by debasing and lowering the standard. Each, therefore, in a different sense, and for different reasons, is useless to human nature as it is. Now comes Christianity, and effects a synthesis of all which is good in each, while she purifies herself from all taint of what is evil. She presents a standard of holiness, a "maximum perfectionis" (as the scholastic phrase is), no less exalted, no less jealous of all earthly taint or soil, than Stoicism. This, however, she makes accessible to man: not by any compromise or adaptation of its demands to a lower nature; but by means peculiarly her own—by promise of supernatural aid. Thus she is celestial like the one, and terrestrial like the other, but by such a reconciliation as celestial means only could effect. This Kant allowed to constitute a philosophic character for Christianity, which offered itself at the very vestibule. And in this function of hope, as one which is foremost amongst the functions of charity, there is the very same harmony of rigour in the judge, and loyalty to the standard erected, with human condescension and consideration for the criminal.

times occurred in our stormy times with respect to writers, male and female, who set the dominant notions, or the prevailing feelings of men—(feelings with regard to sexual proprieties, to social distinctions, to the sanctity of property, to the sanctity of religious formulæ, &c. &c.)—at open defiance. Take, for example, Thelwall at one time, Holcroft, Godwin, Mrs. Wolstonecraft, Dr. Priestley, Hazlitt; all of whom were, more or less, in a backward or inverse sense, *tabooed*—that is, consecrated to public hatred and scorn. With respect to all these persons, feeling that the public alienation had gone too far, or had begun originally upon false grounds, Lamb threw his heart and his doors wide open. Politics—what cared he for politics? Religion—in the sense of theological dogmas—what cared he for religion? For religion in its moral aspects, and its relations to the heart of man, no human being ever cared more. With respect to politics, some of his friends could have wished him to hate men when they grew *anti-national*, and in that case only; but he would not. He persisted in liking men who made an idol of Napoleon, who sighed over the dread name of Waterloo, and frowned upon Trafalgar. *There* I thought him wrong; but in that, as one of my guardians used to say of me, he "followed his own devil"; though, after all, I believe he took a secret, silent pleasure in the grandeur of his country, and would have suffered in her suffering—would have been humiliated in her humiliation—more than he altogether acknowledged to himself; in fact, his carelessness grew out of the depth of his security. He could well afford to be free of anxiety in a case like this; for the solicitudes of jealous affection, the tremulous and apprehensive love, as "of a mother or a child" (which painful mood of love Wordsworth professes for his country, but only in a wayward fit of passion), could scarcely be thought applicable, even in the worst days of Napoleon, to a national grandeur and power which seem as little liable to chance or change, as essentially unapproachable by any serious impeachment, as the principle of gravitation or the composition of the air. Why, therefore, should *he* trouble himself more about the nice momentary oscillations of the national fortunes in war or council, more than about ad-

justing his balance so as not to disturb the equilibrium of the earth?

There was another trait of character about Charles Lamb, which might have countenanced the common notion that he looked indulgently upon dissolute men, or men notorious for some criminal escapade. This was his thorough hatred of all hypocrisy, and his *practical* display of that hatred on all possible occasions. Even in a point so foreign, as it might seem, from this subject as his style, though chiefly founded upon his intellectual differences and his peculiar taste, the prevailing tone of it was in part influenced (or at least sustained) by his disgust for all which transcended the naked simplicity of truth. This is a deep subject, with as many faces, or *facets* (to speak the language of jewellers), as a rose-cut diamond; and far be it from me to say one word in praise of those—people of how narrow a sensibility!—who imagine that a simple (that is, according to many tastes, an unelevated and *unrhythmical*) style—take, for instance, an Addisonian or a Swiftian style — is *unconditionally* good. Not so: all depends upon the subject; and there is a style transcending these and all other modes of simplicity by infinite degrees, and in the same proportion impossible to most men: the rhythmical — the continuous — what in French is called the *soutenu;* which to humbler styles stands in the relation of an organ to a shepherd's pipe. This also finds its justification in its subject; and the subject which *can* justify it must be of a corresponding quality—loftier, and, therefore, rare.

If, then, in style—so indirect an expression as *that* must be considered of his nature and moral feelings—how much more in their direct and conscious expressions was Lamb impatient of hypocrisy! Hypocrisy may be considered as the heroic form of affectation. Now, the very basis of Lamb's character was laid in downright horror of affectation. If he found himself by accident using a rather fine word, notwithstanding it might be the most forcible in that place (the word *arrest*, suppose, in certain situations, for the word *catch*), he would, if it were allowed to stand, make merry with his own grandiloquence at the moment; and, in after moments, he would continually ridicule that class of words,

by others carried to an extreme of pedantry — the word "*arride*," for instance, used in the sense of *pleasing*, or *winning the approbation*—just as Charles Fox, another patron of simplicity, or, at least, of humility in style, was accustomed to use the word "*vilipend*," as a standing way of sarcastically recalling to the reader's mind the Latinizing writers of English. Hence—that is, from this intense sincerity and truth of character—Lamb would allow himself to say things that shocked the feelings of the company — shocked sometimes in the sense of startling or electrifying, as by something that was odd ; but also sometimes shocked with the sense of what was revolting, as by a Swiftian laying bare of naked shivering human nature. Such exposures of masquerading vanity, such surgical probings and vexings of the secret feelings, I have seen almost truculently pursued by Lamb. He seemed angry and fierce in such cases only ; but the anger was for the affectation and insincerity, which he could not endure, unless where they covered some shame or timidity, never where they were masks for attacking an individual. The case of insincerity, above all others, which moved his bile was where, out of some pretended homage to public decorum, an individual was run down on account of any moral infirmities, such as we all have, or have had, or at least so easily and naturally may have had that nobody knows whether we have them or not. In such a case, and in this only almost, Lamb could be savage in his manner. I remember one instance, where many of the leading authors of our age were assembled—Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, &c. Lamb was amongst them ; and, when —— was denounced as a man careless in the education of his children, and generally reputed to lead a licentious life — "Pretty fellows *we* are," said Lamb, "to abuse him on that last score, when every one of us, I suppose, on going out this night into the Strand, will make up to the first pretty girl he sees." Some laughed ; some looked grim ; some looked grand ; but Wordsworth, smiling, and yet with solemnity, said—"I hope, I trust, Mr. Lamb, you are mistaken, or, at least, you do not include us all in this sweeping judgment ?" "Oh, as to that," said Lamb, "who knows ? There's no telling : sad Josephs are some of us in this very room."

Upon which everybody laughed, and Lamb amongst them; but he had been indignant and sincere in this rebuke of the hypocritical sacrifice to decorum. He manifested a fervour of feeling in such cases; not of anger primarily to the assailant—*that* was but a reaction; his fervour was a movement of intense and conscientious justice towards the person assailed, as in one who felt that he himself, if not by the very same trespasses, had erred and was liable to err; that he also was a brother in human infirmity, and a debtor to the frailty of all flesh, though not possibly by the same overt acts or habits.

In reviewing the life of Lamb it is almost inevitable that, to a reader not specially acquainted with its events beyond what Sergeant Talfourd has judged it proper to communicate, many things will appear strange and unexplained. In a copy of the Sergeant's work now lying before me,[1] which had been borrowed for my use from a distinguished literary lady, I find a pencil mark of interrogation attached to the word "*chequered*," by which, at p. 334, Vol. II, Lamb's life is characterized. This is a natural expression of surprise, under the suppressions which have been here practised; suppressions dictated alike by delicacy for what is too closely personal, and by reverential pity for what is too afflicting. Still it will be asked by those who read attentively, In what sense was Lamb's life *chequered?* As Wordsworth has scattered repeated allusions to this subject in his fine memorial verses on Lamb—allusions which must, for the present, be almost unintelligible to the great majority of readers—and as he has done this notwithstanding he was perfectly aware at the time of the Sergeant's reserve, and aware also that this reserve was not accidental, professing himself moreover to be

> "Awed by the theme's peculiar sanctity,
> Which words less free"

(viz. the prose narrative of Lamb's biographer, which wanted, of necessity, the impassioned tenderness of a poetic memorial)

[1] Talfourd's edition of Lamb's prose-works, with a sketch of his life, was first published in 1836, in three volumes.—M.

"Presumed not even to touch";—

under these circumstances it may be right, whilst still persisting in not raising that veil which has been dropped over this subject by Sergeant Talfourd, out of profound feelings for the surviving lady of the family,—that sister of Charles Lamb who presented so much of his own genius and his own disposition through a softened or lunar reflection, and who was the great consoler of his affliction,—that sister,

> "The meek,
> The self-restraining, and the ever kind,
> In whom *his* reason and intelligent heart
> Found, for all interests, hopes, and tender cares,
> All softening, humanizing, hallowing powers,
> Whether withheld or for her sake unsought,
> More than sufficient recompense;"—

still persisting, I say, out of veneration for this admirable lady, in refusing to raise the veil, it may yet be lawful so far to assist the reader in penetrating its folds as that he may apprehend the main features of the case, in a degree sufficient for the application of Wordsworth's else partly unintelligible verses: and the more so for these two reasons:—1st, That several passages in these verses are calculated, at any rate, to pique the curiosity, although they do not satisfy it; 2dly (which must especially be remembered), A *mere* interest of curiosity, curiosity vulgar and disrespectful, cannot be imagined in this case. A curiosity which put the question suggested by the word *chequered*, and absolutely challenged by Wordsworth's verses, must be already one that has been hallowed and refined by a tender interest in the subject; since no interest short of that could have attracted a reader to a life so poor in anecdote or any other vulgar allurements, or, at least, no other could have detained him sufficiently upon its circumstantial parts to allow of his raising the question.

To approach this question, therefore, in the most proper way: perhaps the very same verses of Wordsworth which are amongst the parts of the Sergeant's book most fitted to suggest the question are most fitted to suggest the answer. Being read carefully, without which they will do neither the one nor the other, they indicate their own commentary. One

of the most beautiful passages, and, at the same time, of the most significant, is this :—

> "Thus, 'mid a shifting world,
> Did they together testify of time
> And season's difference—a double tree,
> With two collateral stems sprung from one root ;
> Such were they—such through life they *might* have been
> In union, in partition only such :
> Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High."

They might have exhibited the image of a double tree, in union throughout their joint lives.[1] *Diis aliter visum est.* And then the poet goes on to shadow forth their real course through this world, and to hint at the sad cause which occasionally separated them, under the image of two ships launched jointly, and for the same voyage of discovery—viewing each other, therefore, as partners pursuing common objects, under common hazards and difficulties—often divided by stress of weather, often rejoining each other at the fixed place of rendezvous, again to be separated, and again to be reunited :—

> "Yet, through all visitations and all trials,
> Still they were faithful ; like two vessels launched
> From the same beach one ocean to explore
> With mutual help, and sailing—to their league
> True, as inexorable winds, or bars
> Floating or fixed of polar ice, allow."

But there is another passage still more distinctly pointing the reader's attention to the *recurring* cause of separation :—

> "Ye were taught
> *That the remembrance of foregone distress,*
> *And the worse fear of future ill* (which oft
> Doth hang around it, as a sickly child
> Upon its mother) may be both alike
> Disarmed of power to unsettle present good."

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[1] There is, however, an obscurity in the expression at this point of the verses ; it lies partly in the word *such*. The only construction of the verses in harmony with the words seems the following : They might have appeared as a double tree, &c., whether viewed in those circumstances which united them—viz. in the features of resemblance —or viewed in those of difference, as sex and its moral results, which made the partition between them. Such they *might* have seemed ; but calamity wrought a more perfect division between them, under which they seemed no longer one, but two distinct trees.

This mysterious affliction, therefore, of Lamb's life, making that a "chequered" one which else had been of a character too absolutely tranquil and monotonous—or ruffled, at least, only by *internal* irritations—was (as we learn from Wordsworth) of a nature to revolve upon him at intervals. One other passage—and this also from a poem of Wordsworth, but one written at the very least thirty-two years ago, and having no reference at all to the Lambs—may furnish all the additional light which can be needed. It is one of the poems published in 1807, and many of them suggested by personal or local recollections from a tour then recently performed through Scotland. The poet is speaking of a woman on the Borders, whose appearance and peculiar situation, in relation to a disabled husband, had caught his attention; and the expression of her eye is thus noticed:—

> "I looked and scanned her o'er and o'er;
> The more I looked, I wondered more;
> When suddenly I seemed t' espy
> A trouble in her strong black eye—
> A remnant of *uneasy light*,
> A flash of something *over-bright*."[1]—

Now, if the reader will ask himself what cause, apt to recur in some cases, would be likely to leave these morbid appearances in the eye, this *uneasy light*, and these flashes that were *over-bright*—he will then apprehend, in silence and reverential sympathy, what was that huge and steadfast affliction that besieged, through life, the heart of Charles Lamb.

If the reader will further understand that this affliction was not, as the heaviest afflictions oftentimes become, a mere remembrance echoing from past times—possibly "a long since cancelled woe"—but that it was a two-headed snake, looking behind and before, and gnawing at his heart by the double pangs of memory, and of anxiety, gloomy and fearful, watching for the future; and, finally, that the object of this anxiety, who might at any moment be torn from his fireside, to return after an interval of mutual suffering (not to be measured, or even guessed at, but in the councils of God), was that

[1] The lines, not correctly quoted, are from Wordsworth's poem entitled "The Matron of Jedburgh and her Husband," printed among his *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland in* 1803.—M.

Madonna-like lady who to him renewed the case described with such pathetic tenderness by the Homeric Andromache —being, in fact, his "all the world"; fulfilling at once all offices of tenderness and duty; and making up to him, in her single character of sister, all that he had lost of maternal kindness, all that for *her* sake he had forborne to seek of affections conjugal or filial:—weighing these accumulated circumstances of calamity, the feeling reader will be ready to admit that Lamb's cup of earthly sorrow was full enough to excuse many more than he could be taxed with of those half-crazy eccentricities in which a constant load of secret affliction (such, I mean, as must not be explained to the world) is apt to discharge itself. Hence it might be in part—but some have supposed from a similar, though weaker, taint of the same constitutional malady—that Lamb himself discovered symptoms of irregular feeling or thinking, not such as could have been alarming in a general or neutral case, but in a subject known to be affected by these hereditary predispositions *were* alarming, both to his friends (those of them, at least, who had known the circumstances), and, with far heavier reason, to himself. This also is therefore to be added to his afflictions—not merely the fear constantly impending that his fireside (as I said before) might be rendered desolate, and *that* by a sudden blow, as well as for an indefinite duration; but also the fear (not equally strong, but equally impending for ever) that he himself, and all his splendid faculties, might, as by a flash of lightning, be swallowed up "in darkness infinite."[1]

Such was the condition of Charles Lamb, and such the temper that in part grew out of it—angelically benign, but also, in a morbid degree, melancholy—when I renewed my acquaintance with him in 1808-14; a period during which I learned to appreciate him better. Somewhere in this period it was, by the way, that I had an opportunity of introducing to his knowledge my brother, "poor Pink." Lamb liked him; and the more so from an accident which occurred at the very second interview that he and Pink ever had. It was in Bond Street, at an exhibition of two large and splendid

[1] "The angel ended his mysterious rite;
And the pure vision closed in darkness infinite."

pictures by Salvator Rosa,—one representing a forest scene and a forest recluse (of what character in Salvator's intention may be doubted, but in the little printed account of the paintings he was described as Diogenes). These pictures were, I should think, twelve feet high at the least, consequently upon a large scale ; and the tone of colouring was peculiarly sombre, or rather cold ; and it tended even to the monotonous. One almost uniform cheerless tint of yellowish green, with some little perhaps of a warmish umber, overspread the distances ; and the foreground showed little else than a heavy dull-toned black. Pink, who knew as little of painting as the *bow'sons* of his various ships, had, however, a profound sensibility to some of its effects ; and, if he ever ran up hastily and fearfully to London from Portsmouth, it was sure to be at the time when the annual exhibition of the Academy was open. No exhibition was ever missed by him, whether of a public or comparatively private nature. In particular, he had attended, with infinite delight, the exhibition (in Newman Street, I think) of Mr. West's pictures. *Death and his Pale Horse* prodigiously attracted him ; and others, from the freshness and gorgeousness of their colouring, had absolutely fascinated his eye. It may be imagined, therefore, with what disgust he viewed two subjects, from which the vast name of the painter had led him to expect so much, but which from the low style of the colouring yielded him so little. There might be forty people in the room at the time my brother and I were there. We had stood for ten or fifteen minutes, examining the pictures, when at length I noticed Charles Lamb, and, at a little distance, his sister. If a creditor had wished to seize upon either, no surer place in London (no, not Drury Lane, or Covent Garden) for finding them than an exhibition from the works of the old masters. And, moreover, as, amongst certain classes of birds, if you have one you are sure of the other, so, with respect to the Lambs (unless in those dreary seasons when the "*dual* unity," as it is most affectingly termed by Wordsworth, had been for a time sundered into a widowed desolation by the periodic affliction), seeing or hearing the brother, you knew that the sister could not be far off. If she *were*, you sighed, knew what that meant, and asked no questions.

Lamb, upon seeing us, advanced to shake hands; but he paused one moment to await the critical dogma which he perceived to be at that time issuing from Pink's lips. That it was vituperation in a high degree, anybody near us might hear; and some actually turned round in fright upon catching these profane words:—"D—— the fellow! I could do better myself." Wherewith, perhaps unconsciously, but perhaps also by way of enforcing his thought, Pink (who had brought home from his long sea life a detestable practice of chewing tobacco) ejaculated a quid of some coarse quality, that lighted upon the frame of the great master's picture, and, for aught I know, may be sticking there yet. Lamb could not have approved such a judgment, nor perhaps the immeasurable presumption that might seem to have accompanied such a judgment from most men, or from an artist; but he knew that Pink was a mere sailor, knowing nothing historically of art, nor much of the pretensions of the mighty artists. Or, had it been otherwise, at all events, he admired and loved, beyond all other qualities whatsoever, a hearty, cordial sincerity. Honest homely obstinacy, not to be enslaved by a great name—though that, again, may, by possibility, become in process of time itself an affectation—Lamb almost reverenced; and therefore it need not surprise anybody that, in the midst of his loud, unrepressed laughter, he came up to my brother, and offered his hand, with an air of friendliness that flattered Pink, and a little misled him: for, that evening, on dining with Pink, he said to me—"That Lamb's a sensible fellow. You see how evidently he approved of what I remarked about that old humbugging rascal, Salvator Rosa." Lamb, in this point, had a feature of character in common with Sir Walter Scott (at least I suppose it to have been a feature of Sir Walter's mind, upon the information of Professor Wilson): that, if a man had, or, if he supposed him to have, a strongly marked combination or tendency of feelings, of opinions, of likings, or of dislikings—what in fact, we call a *character*—no matter whether it were built upon prejudices the most extravagant, or ignorance the most profound, provided only it were sincere, and not mere lawless audacity, but were self-consistent, and had *unity* as respected itself—in that extent he was sure to manifest

liking and respect for the man. And hence it was that Lamb liked Pink much more for this Gothic and outrageous sentence upon Salvator Rosa than he would have liked him for the very best, profoundest, or most comprehensive critique upon that artist that could have been delivered. Pink, on the other hand, liked Lamb greatly, and used, in all his letters, to request that I would present his best regards to that Charles Lamb, "who wouldn't be humbugged by the old rascal in Bond Street."

Thus I had gradually unlearned my false opinions, or outworn my false impressions, about Lamb, by the year 1814. Indeed, by that time, I may say that I had learned to appreciate Lamb almost at his full value. And reason there was that I should. For in that year 1814 occurred a trial of Lamb's hold upon his friends' regard which was a test case —a test for each side—since not every man could have mastered this offence, and far less could every man have merited that a man *should* master it. This was the year which closed the great war of wars by its first frail close—the capture of Paris by the Allies. And of these Allies all who had any personal weight or interest (the Austrian Emperor, who was, however, expected at one time, is no exception, for *his* weight was not personal but political)—all, I say, visited London and Oxford. I was at London during that glad tumultuous season. I witnessed the fervent joy—the triumph, too noble, too religious, to be boastful—the rapture of that great era. Coleridge, in the first edition of the "Friend," has described the tempestuous joy of a people, habitually cold in relation to public events, upon occasion of a visit from their Sovereign's wife—the ill-fated Queen of Prussia ; and this he does by way of illustrating the proposition which then occupies him—viz. the natural tendency of men to go beyond the demands of any event, whether personal or national, their inevitable tendency to transcend it by the quality and the amount of their enthusiasm. Now, the scenes then acting in London were, in two weighty respects, different. In the first place, the people—the audience and spectators—concerned were a people as widely opposed to the Prussians in sensibility of a profound nature as it is possible to imagine ; the Prussians being *really* phlegmatic, and the British—as

was many hundreds of times affirmed, and (as far as the case admitted of proof) proved, by the celebrated Walking Stewart, the profoundest of judges on this point—the British being, under the mask of a cold and reserved demeanour, the most impassioned of all nations: in fact, it requires but little philosophy to see that always where the internal heat and power is greatest there will the outside surface be the coldest; and the mere *primâ facie* phenomenon of heat spread over the external manner (as in the French or Italian character, and somewhat in the Irish) is at once an evidence that there is little concentration of it at the heart. The spectators, then, the audience, was different; and the spectacle —oh, Heavens!—how far it must have differed from any that *can* have been witnessed for many centuries! Victors, victories, mere martial talents—were these the subjects of interest?

No man, not Lamb himself, could rate at a lower price such national vanities as these, fitted only, as I think, to win a schoolboy's sympathy. In fact, I have always entertained and avowed a theory upon the question of mere military talent which goes far lower than anybody has yet gone, so far as I am aware; for I have gone so far as to maintain this doctrine — that, if we could detach from the contemplation of a battle the awful interests oftentimes depending upon its issue—if, in fact, we could liberate our minds from the Hartleian law of association, and insulate the mere talent there operating—we should hold the art of fighting a battle to be as far below the art of fighting a game at chess as the skill applicable to the former case is less sure of its effect and less perfect than the skill applicable to the latter. It is true there are other functions of a commander-in-chief, involving large knowledge of human nature, great energy in action, great decision of character, supreme moral courage, and, above all, that rarest species which faces without shrinking civil responsibility. These qualities, in any eminent degree, are rare. But, confining one's view to the mere art of fighting a battle, I hold and insist upon it, that the military art is (intellectually speaking) a vulgar art, a mechanic art, a very limitary art; neither liberal in its nature, nor elevated (as some mechanic arts are) by the extensive range of its details. With such opinions, I am not

a person to be confounded with mere John-Bull exulters in national prowess. Not as victories won by English bayonets or artillery, but as victories in a sublime strife of the good principle with the bad, I entered with all my heart into the fulness of the popular feeling: I rejoiced with the universal nation then rejoicing. There was the "Nation of London" (as I have before called it) to begin with; there was also another nation almost, collected within the walls of London at that time. I rejoiced, as I have said: Lamb did not. Then I was vexed.

It was summer. The earth groaned under foliage and flowers—fruits I was going to say, but, as yet, fruits were not—and the heart of man under the burthen of triumphant gratitude: man, I say; for surely to man, and not to England only, belonged the glory and the harvest of that unequalled triumph.[1] Triumph, however, in the sense of military triumph, was lost and swallowed up in the vast overthrow of evil, and of the evil principle. All nations sympathized with England—with England, as the centre of this great resurrection; centre for the power; centre, most of all, for the moral principle at work. It was, in fact, on that ground, and because all Europe felt and acknowledged that England had put a soul into the resistance to Napoleon, wherever and in whatever corner manifested—therefore it was that now the crowned heads of Europe, "with all their peerage," paid a visit to this marvellous England. It was a distinct act of homage from all the thrones of Europe, now present on our shores, actually or by representation. Certain it is, that these royal visits to England had no other

[1] It is a favourite doctrine with some of the Radical Reformers (thanks be to God! not with all) to vilify and disparage the war with France from 1793 to 1815, not (as might, perhaps, consistently be done) during some of its years, but throughout and unconditionally—in its objects, its results, its principles. Even contemplating the extreme case of a conquest by France, some of the Radicals maintain, that we should not have suffered much; that the French were a civilized people; that, doubtless, they (here, however, it was forgotten that this "they" was not the French people, but the French army) would not have abused their power, even suppose them to have gained possession of London. Candid reader! read Duppa's account of the French reign in Rome; *any* account of Davoust's in Hamburgh; *any* account of Junot's in Lisbon.

ground than the astonishment felt for the moral grandeur of the country which only, amongst all countries, had yielded nothing to fear—nothing to despondency—and also the astonishment felt, at any rate by those incapable of higher emotions, for its enormous resources, which had been found adequate to the support not only of its own colossal exertions, but of those made by almost half of Christendom besides. Never before in this world was there so large a congress of princes and illustrious leaders, attracted together by the mere force of unwilling, and, in some instances, jealous admiration. I was in London during that fervent carnival of national enthusiasm ; and naturally, though no seeker of spectacles, I saw—for nobody who walked the streets of western London could avoid seeing—the chief objects of public interest. I was passing from Hyde Park along Piccadilly on the day when the Emperor of Russia [1] was expected. Many scores of thousands had gone out of London over Blackfriars Bridge expressly to meet him, on the understanding that he was to make his approach by that route. At the moment when I reached the steps of the Pulteney Hotel, a single carriage of plain appearance, followed by two clumsy Cossack small landaus (or rather what used to be called *sociables*), approached at a rapid pace : so rapid that I had not time to pass before the waiters of the hotel had formed a line across the foot-pavement intercepting the passing. In a moment, a cry arose—"The Czar ! the Czar ! "—and, before I could count six, I found myself in a crowd. The carriage door was opened, the steps let down, and one gentleman, unattended, stepped out. His purpose was to have passed through the avenue formed for him in so rapid a way as to prevent any recognition of his person ; but the cry in the street, the huzzas, and the trampling crowd, had brought to a front window on the drawing-room storey a lady whom I had seen often before, and knew to be the Duchess of Oldenburg, the Emperor's sister. Her white dress caught the traveller's eye ; and he stopped to kiss his hand to her. This action and attitude gave us all an admirable opportunity for scanning his features and whole personal appearance. There was nothing about it to impress one very favourably. His younger brother, the present

[1] Alexander I., Emperor of Russia from 1801 to 1825.—M.

Emperor,[1] is described by all those who saw him when travelling in Great Britain as a man of dignified and impressive exterior. Not so with the Emperor Alexander; he was tall, and seemed likely to become corpulent as he advanced in life (at that time he was not above thirty-seven); and in his figure there seemed nothing particularly amiss. His dress, however, was unfortunate; it was a *green* surtout: now, it may be remarked, that men rarely assume this colour who have not something French in their taste. His was so in all things, as might be expected from his French education under the literary fribble, Monsieur La Harpe.

But, waiving his appearance in other respects, what instantly repelled all thoughts of an *imperial* presence was his unfortunate face. It was a face wearing a northern fairness, and not perhaps unamiable in its expression; but it was overladen with flesh, and expressed nothing at all; or, if anything, good humour, good nature, and considerable self-complacency. In fact, the only prominent feature in the Czar's disposition was an amiable, somewhat sentimental, ostentation—amiable, I say, for it was not connected with a gloomy pride or repulsive arrogance, but with a blind and winning vanity. And this cast of character was so far fortunate as it supplied impulses to exertion, and irritated into activity a weak mind, that would else, by its natural tendencies, have sunk into torpor. His extensive travels, however, were judiciously fitted for rescuing him from that curse of splendid courts; and his greatest enemy had also been his greatest benefactor, though unintentionally, through the tempestuous agitations of the Russian mind, and of Russian society, in all its strata, during that most portentous of all romances—not excepting any of the crusades, or the adventurous expeditions of Cortez and Pizarro, still less the Parthian invasions of Crassus or of Julian—viz. the *anabasis* of Napoleon. There can be no doubt, to any reflecting mind, that the happiest part of his reign, even to Charles I., was that which was also, in a political sense, the period of his misfortunes—viz. the seven years between 1641 and 1649; three of which were occupied in stormy but adventurous war; and the other four in romantic journeys, escapes,

[1] Nicholas I., Emperor of Russia from 1825 to 1855.—M.

and attempts at escape, checkered, doubtless, with trepidations and anxieties, hope and fear, grief and exultation, which, however much tainted with distress, still threw him upon his own resources of every kind, bodily not less than moral and intellectual, which else the lethargy of a court would have left undeveloped and unsuspected even by himself. Such also had been the quality of the Russian Emperor's experience for some of his later years; and such, probably, had been the result of his own comparative happiness. Yet it was said that, about this time, the peace of Alexander's mind was beginning to give way. It is well known that a Russian Emperor, lord of sixty million lives, is not lord of his own, not at any time. He sleeps always in the bosom of danger, secret, unfathomable, invisible. It is the inevitable condition of despotism and autocracy that he should do so. And the Russian Czar is, as to security, pretty nearly in the situation of the Roman Cæsar.

He, however, who is always and consciously in danger may be supposed to become partially reconciled to it. But, be that as it may, it was supposed that, at this time, Alexander became aware of some special conspiracies that were ripening at home against his own person. It was rumoured that, just about this time, in the very centre of exuberant jubilations, ascending from every people in Europe, he lost his serenity and cheerful temper. On this one occasion, in the moment of rejoining a sister whom he was said to love with peculiar tenderness, he certainly looked happy; but on several subsequent opportunities that I had of seeing him he looked much otherwise; disturbed and thoughtful, and as if seeking to banish alarming images by excess of turbulent gaiety, by dancing, or by any mode of distraction. Under this influence it was also, or was supposed to be, that he manifested unusual interest in religious speculations; diverting to these subjects, especially to those of a quietist character (such as the doctrines of the English Quakers), that enthusiasm which hitherto, for several years, he had dedicated to military studies and pursuits. Meantime, the most interesting feature belonging to the martial equipage which he drew after him was the multitude of Tartar or other Asiatic objects, men, carriages, &c., prevailing in the crowd,

and suggesting the enormous magnitude of the empire from whose remote provinces they came. There were also the European Tartars, the Cossacks, with their Hetman Platoff. He had his abode somewhere to the north of Oxford Street; and further illustrated the imperial grandeur, being himself a sovereign prince, and yet a vassal when he found himself in the presence of Alexander. This prince, who (as is well known) loved and honoured the English, as he afterwards testified by the most princely welcome to all of that nation who visited his territories, was, on his part, equally a favourite with the English. He had lost his gallant son in a cavalry skirmish; and his spirits had been much depressed by that calamity. But he so far commanded himself as to make his private feelings give way to his public enthusiasm; and he never withdrew himself from the clamorous applause of the mob, in which he took an undisguised pleasure. This was the man, amongst all the public visitors now claiming the hospitality of the English Regent, whom Lamb saw and talked of with most pleasure. His sublime ugliness was most delectable to him; and the Tartar propensities, some of which had been perhaps exaggerated by the newspapers (such, for instance, as their drinking the oil out of the street lamps), furnished him with a constant *feu-de-joie* of jests and playful fictions, at the expense of the Hetman; and in that way it was that he chiefly expressed *his* sympathy with this great festal display.

Marshal Blucher, who still more powerfully converged upon himself the interest of the public, was lodged in a little quadrangle of St. James's Palace (that to the right of the clock-tower entrance). So imperious and exacting was the general curiosity to see the features of the old soldier—this Marshal "*Forwards*," as he was always called in Germany, and who had exhibited the greater merit of an Abdiel fidelity on occasion of the mighty day of Jena—that the court was filled from an early hour of every morning, until a late dinner-hour, with a mob of all ranks, calling for him by his name, *tout court*, "Blucher! Blucher!" At short intervals, not longer in general than five minutes, the old warrior obeyed the summons throughout the day, unless when he was known to be absent on some public occasion. His

slavery must have been most wearisome to his feelings. But he submitted with the utmost good nature, and allowed cheerfully for the enthusiasm which did so much honour to himself and to his country. In fact, this enthusiasm, on his first arrival in London, showed itself in a way that astonished everybody, and was half calculated to alarm a stranger. He had directed the postilion to proceed straightway to Carlton House—his purpose being to present his duty in person to the Regent, before he rested upon English ground. This was his way of expressing his homage to the British nation for upholding, through all fortunes, that sacred cause of which he also had never despaired. Moreover, his hatred of France, and the very name French, was so intense that upon that title also he cherished an ancient love towards England. As the carriage passed through the gateway of the Horse-Guards, the crowd, which had discovered him, became enormous. When the garden or Park entrance to the palace was thrown open to admit Blucher, the vast mob, for the first and the last time, carried the entrance as if by storm. All opposition from the porters, the police, the soldiers on duty, was vain; and many thousands of people accompanied the veteran prince, literally "hustling" his carriage, and in a manner carrying him in their arms to the steps of the palace door; on the top of which, waiting to receive him, stood the English Regent. The Regent himself smiled graciously and approvingly upon this outrage, which, on any minor occasion, would have struck him with consternation, perhaps, as well as disgust.

Lamb, I believe, as well as myself, witnessed part of this scene; which was the most emphatic exhibition of an uncontrollable impulse, a perfect rapture of joy and exultation, possessing a vast multitude with entire unity of feeling, that I have ever witnessed—excepting, indeed, once besides, and that was a scene of the very same kind, or rather a reflection of the same scene. It occurred in Hyde Park, on the following Sunday. Prince Blucher and his master, the King of Prussia; the Hetman of the Cossacks, with his master, the Czar; the Duke of Wellington, with some of the Royal Dukes, and a vast *cortége* of civil and military dignities —in short, the élite of all the great names that had grown

into distinction in the late wonderful campaigns, German, Spanish, French—rode into the Park simultaneously. If there had been any division of their several suites and parties, this had vanished; and all were thrown into one splendid confusion, under a summer sun. The Park was, of course, floating with a sea of human heads. And, in particular, there was a dense mass of horsemen, amounting to six thousand at least (as I was told by a person accustomed to compute crowds), following close in the rear. The van of this mighty body, composed of so many "princedoms, dominations, virtues, powers," directed their course to Kensington Gardens; into these, as privileged guests, they were admitted —precautions, founded on the Carlton House experience, having been taken to exclude the *ignobile vulgus* who followed. The impulse, however, of the occasion was too mighty for the case. The spectacle was absolutely sublime —of hurricane, instantaneous power, sweeping away, like an Alpine lake broken loose, all barriers almost before they were seen. The six thousand horsemen charged into the Gardens; that being (as in the other case) the first and also the last intrusion of the kind.

One thing in this popular festival of rejoicing was peculiarly pleasing to myself and to many others—the proof that was thus afforded to so many eminent foreigners of our liberality, and total freedom from a narrow or ungenerous nationality. This is a grave theme, and one which, on account of the vast superstructure reared upon it of calumnious insult to our national character, requires a separate discussion. Here it may be sufficient to say that Marshal Blucher, at least, could have no reason to think us an arrogant people, or narrow in our national sensibilities to merit wherever found. He could not but know that we had also great military names to show—one or two greater than his own; for, in reality, his qualities were those of a mere fighting captain, with no great reach of capacity, and of slender accomplishments. Yet we—that is to say, even the street mob of London—glorified him as much as ever they did Lord Nelson, and more than they ever did the Duke of Wellington. In this crowd, on this memorable Sunday, by-the-bye, rode Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, as yet obscure

and poor (not having £300 a year), and seeing neither his future prosperity, nor its sudden blight, nor its resurrection. There also rode the Prince of Orange, and many another who was to reap laurels in the coming year, but was yet dreaming not of Waterloo as a possibility. With respect to Blucher, however, it is painful to know that he, who was now so agreeably convinced of our national generosity, came afterwards to show that jealousy of us which we had so loudly refused to feel of him, through the mere mortifications practised on his self-esteem, perhaps maliciously, by the French authorities, in passing by himself and addressing their applications to the Duke of Wellington.

Fouché, Chaboulon de la Râtre, and other writers, have recorded the maniacal rage of Prince Blucher, when despatches from Paris passed through his camp—nay, were forwarded to his head-quarters, in order to gain—what? Audience from him? No. Sanction from him? No. Merely a countersign, or a passport for the messenger; some purely ministerial act of participation in the transit of the courier; the despatches being uniformly for the Duke of Wellington. This, on the part of the French authorities, must have been, in some respects, a malicious act. Doubtless, the English general was known only in the character of a victor; whereas Blucher (and *that* the old testy hussar should have remembered) had never been known at Paris for anything but defeats; and, within the week preceding, for a signal defeat, which many think might have been ripened into a smashing overthrow. But, still, there can be no doubt that deadly malice towards the Prussian name was the true ground of the act; for the Parisians bore (and still bear) a hatred to the Prussians absolutely irrational and inexplicable. The battle of Rosbach can hardly have been the reason, still less the Prussian resumption of the trophies then gathered from France, and subsequently carried off by Napoleon; for, as yet, they had *not* been resumed. The ground of this hatred must have lain in the famous manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick; for he, as a servant of the Prussian throne, and commanding a Prussian army, was looked upon as a Prussian.

This change, however, in Blucher—this jealousy of

England within so short a time—astonished and grieved all who had seen him amongst ourselves. Many a time I met him in the street; four or five times in streets where he could not have been looked for—the streets of the *City;* and always with a retinue of applauders, that spread like wildfire. Once only he seemed to have a chance for passing *incognito.* It was in Cheapside. He was riding, as he generally was, in the open carriage (on this occasion a curricle) of some gentleman with whom he was going to dine at a villa near London. A brewer's waggon stopped the way for two minutes; in that space of time, twenty people crowded about who knew his features: "Blucher! Blucher!" resounded through the street in a moment; an uproar rose to heaven; and the old Marshal's face relaxed from its gravity, or its sternness (though, to say the truth, there was little of determinate expression in his features, and, if he had not been so memorable a person, one would have thought him a mere snuffy old German): relaxing, however, from his habitual tom-cat gravity, he looked gracious and benign. Then, at least, he loved us English; then he had reason to love us; for we made a pet of him; and a pet in a cause which would yet make his bones stir in the grave—in the national cause of Prussia against France. I have often wondered that he did not go mad with the fumes of gratified vengeance. Revenge is a luxury, to those who *can* rejoice in it at all, so inebriating that possibly a man would be equally liable to madness from the perfect gratification of his vindictive hatred or its perfect defeat. And hence it may have been that Blucher did *not* go mad. Few men have had so ample a vengeance as he, when holding Paris as a conqueror; and yet, because he was but one of several who so held it, and because he was prevented from mining and blowing up the bridge of Jena, in that way, perhaps, the delirium of his vengeance became less intoxicating.

Now, returning to Lamb, I may remark that, at this memorable season his wayward nature showed itself more conspicuously than ever. One might have thought that, if he manifested no sympathy in a direct shape with the primary cause of the public emotion, still he would have sympathized, in a secondary way, with the delirious joy which every street,

every alley, then manifested, to the ear as well as to the eye. But no! Still, like Diogenes, he threw upon us all a scoffing air, as of one who stands upon a pedestal of eternity, looking down upon those who share in the transitory feelings of their own age. How he felt in the following year, when the mighty drama was consummated by Waterloo, I cannot say, for I was not then in London: I guess, however, that he would have manifested pretty much the same cynical contempt for us children of the time that he did in all former cases.

Not until 1821, and again in 1823, did I come to know Charles Lamb thoroughly. Politics, national enthusiasm, had then gone to sleep. I had come up to London in a case connected with my own private interest. In the same spirit of frankness that I have shown on other occasions in these personal sketches, I shall here not scruple to mention that certain pecuniary embarrassments had rendered it necessary that I should extricate myself by literary toils. I was ill at that time, and for years after—ill from the effects of opium upon the liver; and one primary indication of any illness felt in that organ is peculiar depression of spirits. Hence arose a singular effect of reciprocal action, in maintaining a state of dejection. From the original physical depression caused by the derangement of the liver arose a sympathetic depression of the mind, disposing me to believe that I never *could* extricate myself; and from this belief arose, by reaction, a thousand-fold increase of the physical depression. I began to view my unhappy London life—a life of literary toils, odious to my heart—as a permanent state of exile from my Westmoreland home. My three eldest children, at that time in the most interesting stages of childhood and infancy, were in Westmoreland; and so powerful was my feeling (derived merely from a deranged liver) of some long, never-ending separation from my family, that at length, in pure weakness of mind, I was obliged to relinquish my daily walks in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, from the misery of seeing children in multitudes, that too forcibly recalled my own. The Picture of Fox-ghyll, my Westmoreland abode, and the solitary fells about it, upon which those were roaming whom I could not see, was for ever before my eyes. And

it must be remembered that distance—the mere amount of distance—has much to do in such a case. You are equally divided from those you love, it is very true, by one hundred miles. But that, being a space which in England we often traverse in eight or ten hours, even without the benefit of railroads, has come to seem nothing at all. Fox-ghyll, on the other hand, was two hundred and eighty miles distant; and, from the obstacles at the latter end of the journey (cross-roads and interruptions of all public communications), it seemed twice as long.

Meantime, it is very true that the labours I had to face would not, even to myself, in a state of good bodily health, have appeared alarming. *Myself*, I say—for, in any state of health, I do not write with rapidity. Under the influence of opium, however, when it reaches its maximum in diseasing the liver and deranging the digestive functions, all exertion whatever is revolting in excess; intellectual exertion, above all, is connected habitually, when performed under opium influence, with a sense of disgust the most profound for the subject (no matter what) which detains the thoughts; all that morning freshness of animal spirits which, under ordinary circumstances, consumes, as it were, and swallows up the interval between one's self and one's distant object (consumes, that is, in the same sense as Virgil describes a high-blooded horse, on the fret for starting, as traversing the ground with his eye, and devouring the distance in fancy before it is approached): all that dewy freshness is exhaled and burnt off by the parching effects of opium on the animal economy. You feel like one of Swift's *Struldbrugs*, prematurely exhausted of life; and molehills are inevitably exaggerated by the feelings into mountains. Not that it was molehills exactly which I had then to surmount—they were moderate hills; but that made it all the worse in the result, since my judgment could not altogether refuse to go along with my feelings. I was, besides, and had been for some time, engaged in the task of unthreading the labyrinth by which I had reached, unawares, my present state of slavery to opium. I was descending the mighty ladder, stretching to the clouds as it seemed, by which I had imperceptibly attained my giddy altitude—that point from which

it had seemed equally impossible to go forward or backward. To wean myself from opium I had resolved inexorably; and finally I accomplished my vow. But the transition state was the worst state of all to support. All the pains of martyrdom were there: all the ravages in the economy of the great central organ, the stomach, which had been wrought by opium; the sickening disgust which attended each separate respiration; and the rooted depravation of the appetite and the digestion—all these must be weathered for months upon months, and without the stimulus (however false and treacherous) which, for some part of each day, the old doses of laudanum would have supplied. These doses were to be continually diminished; and, under this difficult dilemma: if, as some people advised, the diminution were made by so trifling a quantity as to be imperceptible—in that case, the duration of the process was interminable and hopeless. Thirty years would not have sufficed to carry it through. On the other hand, if twenty-five to fifty drops were withdrawn on each day (that is, from one to two grains of opium), inevitably within three, four, or five days, the deduction began to tell grievously; and the effect was to restore the craving for opium more keenly than ever. There was the collision of both evils—that from the laudanum, and that from the want of laudanum. The last was a state of distress perpetually increasing; the other was one which did not sensibly diminish—no, not for a long period of months. Irregular motions, impressed by a potent agent upon the blood or other processes of life, are slow to subside; they maintain themselves long after the exciting cause has been partially or even wholly withdrawn; and, in my case, they did not perfectly subside into the motion of tranquil health for several years.

From all this it will be easy to understand the *fact*—though, after all, impossible, without a similar experience, to understand the *amount*—of my suffering and despondency in the daily task upon which circumstances had thrown me at this period—the task of writing and producing something for the journals *invita Minerva*. Over and above the principal operation of my suffering state, as felt in the enormous difficulty with which it loaded every act of exertion,

there was another secondary effect which always followed as a reaction from the first. And that this was no accident or peculiarity attached to my individual temperament, I may presume from the circumstance that Mr. Coleridge experienced the very same sensations, in the same situation, throughout his literary life, and has often noticed it to me with surprise and vexation. The sensation was that of powerful disgust with any subject upon which he had occupied his thoughts, or had exerted his powers of composition for any length of time, and an equal disgust with the result of his exertions—powerful abhorrence I may call it, absolute loathing, of all that he had produced. In Mr. Coleridge's case, speaking at least of the time from 1807 to 1815, this effect was a most unhappy one ; as it tended to check or even to suppress his attempts at writing for the press, in a degree which cannot but have been very injurious for all of us who wished to benefit by his original intellect, then in the very pomp of its vigour. This effect was, indeed, more extensive than with myself: with Coleridge, even *talking* upon a subject, and throwing out his thoughts upon it liberally and generally, was an insurmountable bar to writing upon it with effect. In the same proportion in which he had been felicitous as a talker, did he come to loathe and recoil from the subject ever afterwards; or, at least, so long as any impressions remained behind of his own display. And so far did this go—so uniformly, and so notoriously to those about him—that Miss Hutchinson, a young lady in those days whom Coleridge greatly admired, and loved as a sister, submitted at times to the trouble of taking down what fell from his lips, in the hope that it might serve as materials to be worked up at some future period, when the disgust should have subsided, or perhaps, in spite of that disgust, when he should see the topics and their illustrations all collected for him, without the painful effort of recovering them by calling up loathsome trains of thought. It was even suggested, and at one time (I believe) formally proposed, by some of Coleridge's friends, that, to save from perishing the overflowing opulence of golden thoughts continually welling up and flowing to waste in the course of his ordinary conversation, some short-hand writer, having the suitable accomplishments of a learned

education and habits of study, should be introduced as a domestic companion. But the scheme was dropped; perhaps from the feeling in Coleridge himself that he would not command his usual felicity, or his natural power of thought, under the consciousness of an echo sitting by his side, and repeating to the world all the half-developed thoughts or half-expressed suggestions which he might happen to throw out. In the meantime, for the want of some such attendant, certain it is that many valuable papers perished.

In 1810 "The Friend" was in a course of publication by single sheets of sixteen pages. These, by the terms of the prospectus, should have appeared weekly. But, if at any time it happened that Wordsworth, or anybody else interested in the theme, came into Coleridge's study whilst he was commencing his periodical lucubrations, and, naturally enough, led him into an oral disquisition upon it, then perished all chance for that week's fulfilment of the contract. Miss Hutchinson, who was aware of this, did her best to throw hindrances in the way of this catastrophe, but too often ineffectually: and, accordingly, to this cause, as a principal one amongst others, may be ascribed the very irregular intervals between the several numbers of "The Friend" in its first edition; and to this, also, perhaps, the abrupt termination of the whole at the twenty-ninth number.[1] In after years, Coleridge assured me that he never could read anything he had written without a sense of overpowering disgust. Reverting to my own case, which was pretty nearly the same as his, there was, however, this difference—that, at times, when I had slept at more regular hours for several nights consecutively, and had armed myself by a sudden increase of the opium for a few days running, I recovered, at times, a remarkable glow of jovial spirits. In some such artificial respites it was from my usual state of distress, and purchased at a heavy price of subsequent suffering, that I wrote the greater part of the Opium Confessions in the autumn of 1821. The introductory part (*i.e.* the narrative part) written for the double purpose of creating an interest in what followed, and of making it intelligible, since, without this narration, the dreams (which were the real object of the

[1] See footnote, *ante*, vol. ii. p. 190.—M.

whole work) would have had no meaning, but would have been mere incoherencies—this narrative part was written with singular rapidity. The rest might be said to have occupied an unusual length of time ; since, though the mere penmanship might have been performed within moderate limits (and in fact under some pressure from the printer), the dreams had been composed slowly, and by separate efforts of thought, at wide intervals of time, according to the accidental prevalence, at any particular time, of the separate elements of such dream in my own real dream-experience. These circumstances I mention to account for my having written anything in a happy or genial state of mind, when I was in a general state so opposite, by my own description, to everything like enjoyment. That description, as a *general* one, states most truly the unhappy condition, and the somewhat extraordinary condition of feeling, to which opium had brought me. I, like Mr. Coleridge, could not endure what I had written for some time after I had written it. I also shrunk from treating any subject which I had much considered ; but more, I believe, as recoiling from the intricacy and the elaborateness which had been made known to me in the course of considering it, and on account of the difficulty or the toilsomeness which might be fairly presumed from the mere fact that I *had* long considered it, or could have found it necessary to do so, than from any blind mechanical feeling inevitably associated (as in Coleridge it was) with a second survey of the same subject.

One other effect there was from the opium, and I believe it had some place in Coleridge's list of morbid affections caused by opium, and of disturbances extended even to the intellect—which was, that the judgment was for a time grievously impaired, sometimes even totally abolished, as applied to anything which I had recently written. Fresh from the labour of composition, I believe, indeed, that almost every man, unless he has had a very long and close experience in the practice of writing, finds himself a little dazzled and bewildered in computing the effect, as it will appear to neutral eyes, of what he has produced. This result from the hurry and effort of composition doubtless we all experience, or at some time *have* experienced. But the incapacita-

tion which I speak of here, as due to opium, is of another kind and another degree. It is mere childish helplessness, or senile paralysis, of the judgment, which distresses the man in attempting to grasp the upshot and the total effect (the *tout ensemble*) of what he has himself so recently produced. There is the same imbecility in attempting to hold things steadily together, and to bring them under a comprehensive or unifying act of the judging faculty, as there is in the efforts of a drunken man to follow a chain of reasoning. Opium is said to have some *specific* effect of debilitation upon the memory[1]; that is, not merely the general one which might be supposed to accompany its morbid effects upon the bodily system, but some other, more direct, subtle, and exclusive; and this, of whatever nature, may possibly extend to the faculty of judging.

Such, however, over and above the more known and more obvious ill effects upon the spirits and the health, were some of the stronger and more subtle effects of opium in disturbing the intellectual system, as well as the animal, the functions of the will also no less than those of the intellect, from which both Coleridge and myself were suffering at the period to which I now refer (1821-25): evils which found their fullest exemplification in the very act upon which circumstances had now thrown me as the *sine qua non* of my extrication from difficulties—viz. the act of literary composition. This necessity, the fact of its being my one sole resource for the present, and the established experience which I now had of the peculiar embarrassments and counteracting forces which I should find in opium, but still more in the train of consequences left behind by past opium—strongly co-operated with the mere physical despondency arising out of the liver. And this state of partial unhappiness, amongst other outward indications, expressed itself by one mark, which some people

[1] The *technical* memory, or that which depends upon purely arbitrary links of connexion, and therefore more upon a *nisus* or separate activity of the mind—that memory, for instance, which recalls names—is undoubtedly affected, and most powerfully, by opium. On the other hand, the *logical* memory, or that which recalls facts that are connected by fixed relations, and where, A being given, B must go before or after—historical memory, for instance—is not much, if at all, affected by opium.

are apt greatly to misapprehend, as if it were some result of a sentimental turn of feeling—I mean perpetual sighs. But medical men must very well know that a certain state of the liver, *mechanically*, and without any co-operation of the will, expresses itself in sighs. I was much too firm-minded, and too reasonable, to murmur or complain. I certainly suffered deeply, as one who finds himself a banished man from all that he loves, and who had not the consolations of hope, but feared too profoundly that all my efforts—efforts poisoned so sadly by opium—might be unavailing for the end. But still I endured in silence. The mechanical sighs, however, revealed, or seemed to reveal, what was present in my thoughts. Lamb doubtless remarked them; he knew the general outline of my situation; and, after this, he set himself, with all the kindness of a brother, Miss Lamb with the kindness of a sister, to relieve my gloom by the closest attentions. They absolutely persecuted me with hospitalities; and, as it was by their fireside that I felt most cheered, and sometimes elevated into hope, it may be supposed that I did not neglect to avail myself of the golden hours thus benignantly interposed amongst my hours of solitude, despondency, and labour but partially effectual.

Thus then it arose, and at this period, that I had my first experience of Lamb's nature and peculiar powers. During one part of the time, I, whose lodgings were in York Street, Covent Garden,[1] became near neighbour to the Lambs —who (with a view to the two great theatres, I believe) emigrated for some months from the Temple to Russell Street. With their usual delicacy, the Lambs seemed to guess that, in my frame of mind, society of a mixed character might not be acceptable to me. Accordingly, they did not ask me to their parties, unless where they happened to be small ones: but, as often as they were free of engagements themselves, they would take no denial—come I must, to dine with them and stay as late as I would.

The very first time on which these dinner invitations

[1] In Bohn's edition of Lowndes's *Bibliographer's Manual* the lodgings in which De Quincey wrote his *Confessions* are more particularly described as "a little room at the back of Mr. H. G. Bohn's premises, No. 4 York Street, Covent Garden."—M.

began, a scene occurred with Charles Lamb which so nearly resembled the Coleridge and "Ancient Mariner" mystification of years long past that perhaps, with all my knowledge of his character, I might have supposed him angry or offended in good earnest, had I not recurred to the lesson of that early introductory visit to the Temple. Some accident, or perhaps it was Lamb himself, had introduced the subject of Hazlitt. Aware of Lamb's regard for him, and of what I esteemed his exaggerated estimate of Hazlitt's powers, I fought shy of any opinion upon him. The fact is, somewhere about that time —but I am not sure whether this had yet happened— Hazlitt had published a little book which was universally laughed at, but which, in one view of it, greatly raised him in my opinion, by showing him to be capable of stronger and more agitating passions than I believed to be within the range of his nature. He had published his "Liber Amoris, or the Modern Pygmalion."[1] And the circumstances of the case were these:—In a lodging-house, which was also, perhaps, a boarding-house, in the neighbourhood of Lincoln's Inn, Hazlitt had rooms. The young woman who waited on him was a daughter of the master of the house. She is described by Hazlitt, whose eye had been long familiar with the beauty (real or ideal) of the painters, as a woman of bewitching features; though one thing, which he confesses in his book, or did confess in conversation, made much against it—viz. that she had a look of being somewhat jaded, as if she were unwell, or the freshness of the animal sensibilities gone by. This girl must evidently have been a mercenary person. Well, if she were not an intriguer in the worst sense, in the sense of a schemer she certainly was. Hazlitt, however, for many weeks (months perhaps) paid her the most delicate attentions, attributing to her a refinement and purity of character to which he afterwards believed that she had no sort of pretensions. All this time—and here was the part of Hazlitt's conduct which extorted some sympathy and honour from me—he went up and down London, raving about this girl. Nothing else would he talk of. "Have you heard of Miss ——?" And then, to the most indif-

[1] Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris, or The New Pygmalion*, was published in 1823.—M.

ferent stranger, he would hurry into a rapturous account of her beauty. For this he was abundantly laughed at. And, as he could not fail to know this—(for the original vice of his character was dark, sidelong suspicion, want of noble confidence in the nobilities of human nature, faith too infirm in what was good and great)—this being so, I do maintain that a passion capable of stifling and transcending what was so prominent in his own nature was, and must have been (however erroneously planted), a noble affection, and justifying that sympathy which I so cordially yielded him. I must reverence a man, be he what he may otherwise, who shows himself capable of profound love.

On this occasion, in consequence of something I said very much like what I am now saying, Hazlitt sent me a copy of his "Liber Amoris"; which, by the way, bore upon the title-page an engraved copy of a female figure—by what painter I forget at this moment, but I think by Titian—which, as Hazlitt imagined, closely resembled the object of his present adoration. The issue for Hazlitt, the unhappy issue of the tale, was as follows:—The girl was a heartless coquette; her father was an humble tradesman (a tailor, I think); but her sister had married very much above her rank; and she, who had the same or greater pretensions personally, now stood on so far better ground than her sister as she could plead, which originally her sister could not, some good connexions. Partly, therefore, she acted in a spirit of manœuvring as regarded Hazlitt: he might do as a *pis aller*, but she hoped to do better; partly also she acted on a more natural impulse. It happened that, amongst the gentleman lodgers, was another, more favoured by nature, as to person, than ever Hazlitt had been; and Hazlitt was now somewhat withered by life and its cares. This stranger was her "fancy-man." Hazlitt suspected something of this for a long time; suspected, doted, and was again persuaded to abandon his suspicions; and yet he could not relish her long conversations with this gentleman. What could they have to say, unless their hearts furnished a subject? Probably the girl would have confessed at once a preference, which, perhaps, she might have no good reason for denying, had it not been that Hazlitt's lavish liberality induced him to over-

whelm her with valuable presents. These she had no mind to renounce. And thus she went on, deceiving and beguiling and betraying poor Hazlitt, now half-crazy with passion, until one fatal Sunday. On that day (the time was evening, in the dusk), with no particular object, but unhappy because he knew that she was gone out, and with some thought that, in the wilderness of London, he might, by chance, stumble upon her, Hazlitt went out; and not a half mile had he gone when, all at once, he fancied that he saw her. A second and nearer glance showed him that he was right. She it was, but hanging on the arm of the hated rival—of him whom she had a hundred times sworn that she never spoke to but upon the business of the house. Hazlitt saw, but was not seen. In the blindness of love, hatred, and despair, he followed them home; kept close behind them; was witness to the blandishments freely interchanged; and soon after he parted with her for ever. Even his works of criticism this dissembling girl had accepted or asked for as presents, with what affectation and hypocrisy Hazlitt now fully understood. In his book, he, in a manner, "whistles her down the wind"; notwithstanding that, even at that time, "her jesses" were even yet "his heart-strings." There is, in the last apostrophe to her—"Poor weed!"—something which, though bitter and contemptuous, is yet tender and gentle; and, even from the book, but much more from the affair itself, as then reported with all its necessary circumstances, something which redeemed Hazlitt from the reproach (which till then he bore) of being open to no grand or profound enthusiasm—no overmastering passion. But now he showed indeed

"The nympholepsy of some fond despair."

Perhaps this furnished the occasion of our falling upon the subject of Hazlitt. What was said will better come in upon another occasion—(viz. that of Hazlitt). Meantime, that Lamb only counterfeited anger appeared from this—that, after tea, he read me his own fine verses on "The Three Graces"; and, that I might not go off with the notion that he read only his own verses, afterwards he read, and read beautifully—for of all our poets Lamb only and Wordsworth read well—a most beautiful sonnet of Lord Thurlow, on "Lacken Water."

In answer to what I considered Lamb's extravagant estimate of Hazlitt, I had said that the misanthropy which gives so unpleasant a tone to that writer's works was, of itself, sufficient to disgust a reader whose feelings do not happen to flow in that channel; that it was, moreover, a crude misanthropy, not resting upon any consistent basis, representing no great principles, good or bad, but simply the peevishness of a disappointed man. I admitted that such a passion as a noble misanthropy was possible; but that there was an ignoble misanthropy; or (taking an illustration, which I knew would tell with Lamb better than all arguments) on the one hand there was the lofty, nay sublime, misanthropy of Timon, on the other the low, villainous misanthropy of Apemantus. Now, the cynicism of Hazlitt, as also of another writer, who, in our times, affected misanthropy, if not exactly that of Apemantus, was too much akin to it; not built on the wild indignation of a generous nature outraged in its best feelings, but in the envy of a discontented one. Lamb paused a little; but at length said that it was for the intellectual Hazlitt, not the moral Hazlitt, that he professed so much admiration. Now, as all people must admit the splendid originality of much that Hazlitt has done, here there might have been a ready means, by favour of the latitude allowed to general expressions, for one, like me, who disliked disputing, to effect a compromise with my opponent. But, unfortunately, Lamb chose to insinuate (whether sincerely and deliberately I cannot say) that Hazlitt was another Coleridge, and that, allowing for his want of poetic power, he was *non tam impar quam dispar*. This I could not stand. I, whose studies had been chiefly in the field of philosophy, could judge of *that*, if I could judge of anything; and certainly I felt entitled to say that anything which Hazlitt might have attempted in philosophy—as his "Essay on the Principles of Human Action," and his polemic "Essay against the Hartleian theory," supposing even that these were not derived entirely from Coleridge (as C. used to assert)—could, at the best, be received only as evidences of ingenuity and a natural turn for philosophizing, but, for any systematic education or regular course of reading in philosophy, these little works are satisfactory proofs that Hazlitt had them not.

The very language and terminology which belong to philosophy, and are indispensable to its free motion, do not seem to have been known to him. And, whatever gleams of wandering truth might flash at times upon his mind, he was at the mercy of every random impulse ; had no principles upon any subject ; was eminently one-sided ; and viewed all things under the angle which chance circumstances presented, never from a central station. Something of this I said, not wishing or hoping to disturb Lamb's opinion, but piqued a little by what seemed to me not so much honour done to Hazlitt as wrong done to Coleridge. Lamb felt, or counterfeited, a warmth that for the moment looked like anger. "I know not," he said, "where you have been so lucky as to find finer thinkers than Hazlitt ; for my part, I know of none such. You live, I think, or have lived, in Grasmere. Well, I was once there. I was at Keswick, and all over that wild country ; yet none such could I find there. But, stay, there are the caves in your neighbourhood, as well as the lakes ; these we did not visit. No, Mary," turning to his sister, "you know we didn't visit the caves. So, perhaps, these great men live there. Oh ! yes, doubtless, they live in the caves of Westmoreland. But you must allow for us poor Londoners. Hazlitt serves for *our* purposes. And in this poor, little, inconsiderable place of London, he is one of our very prime thinkers. But certainly I ought to have made an exception in behalf of the philosophers in the caves." And thus he ran on, until it was difficult to know whether to understand him in jest or earnest.

However, if he felt any vexation, it was gone in a moment ; and he showed his perfect freedom from any relic of irritation, by reading to me one or two of his own beautiful compositions—particularly "The Three Graves."[1] Lamb read remarkably well. There was rather a defect of vigour in his style of reading ; and it was a style better suited to passages of tranquil or solemn movement than to those of tumultuous passion. But his management of the pauses was judicious, his enunciation very distinct, his tones melodious and deep,

[1] Here, and through the rest of the paragraph, De Quincey seems to have forgotten that he had told us the same things more briefly in a preceding paragraph.—M.

and his cadences well executed. The book from which he read was a folio manuscript, in which he had gathered together a number of gems, either his own, or picked up at random from any quarter, no matter how little in the sunshine of the world, that happened to strike his fancy. Amongst them was one which he delighted to read to his friends, as well on account of its real beauty as because it came from one who had been unworthily treated, and so far resembled himself. It was a sonnet of Lord Thurlow, a young poet of those days, who has, I believe, been long dead. I know not whether there is anything besides of equal value amongst this noble writer's works; but assuredly the man who could have written this one sonnet was no fair subject for the laughter which saluted him on his public appearance as an author. It was a sonnet on seeing some birds in a peculiar attitude by the side of Lacken Water. And the sentiment expressed was thankfulness to nature for her bounty in scattering instruction everywhere, and food for meditation, far transcending in value, as well as in extent, all the teaching of the schools. But the point of the whole, which peculiarly won Lamb's approbation, was the way in which the poet had contrived to praise the one fountain of knowledge without disparaging the other. Accordingly, Lamb used always to solicit the hearer's attention by reading it twice over to that passage—

> "There need not schools, nor the Professor's chair,
> *Though these be good*, to "———

This sudden turning aside to disclaim any blame of the one power, because he was proclaiming the all-sufficiency of the other, delighted Lamb as a peculiarly graceful way of expressing the catholic charity which becomes a poet. For it is a maxim to which Lamb often gave utterance (see, for instance, his letters to Bernard Barton) that the genial effect of praise or admiration is robbed of its music, and untuned, by founding it upon some blame or harsh disparagement of a kindred object. If blame be right and called for, then utter it boldly; but do not poison the gracious charities of intellectual love and reverence, when settling upon grand objects, nor sully the brightness of those objects, by forcing the mind

into a remembrance of something that cannot be comprehended within the same genial feelings. No maxim could better display the delicacy and purity of Lamb's childlike spirit of love, to which it was a disturbance, and a torture even, to be reminded that there was anything existing that was legitimately a subject for a frown or a scowl.

About this time it was—the time, viz., from 1821 to 1825—that Lamb first, to my knowledge, fell into the habit of sleeping for half an hour or so after dinner. These occasions exhibited his countenance in its happiest aspect; his slumbers were as tranquil as those of the healthiest infant; and the serene benignity of his features became, in those moments, as I have heard many persons remark, absolutely angelic. That was the situation for an artist to have chosen, in order to convey an adequate impression of his countenance. The portrait of him prefixed to Sergeant Talfourd's book is far from being a good likeness; it has the air of a Venetian senator, and far more resembles Mr. Hamilton Reynolds, the distinguished wit, dressed for an evening party, than Charles Lamb. The whole-length sketch is better; but the nose appears to me much exaggerated in its curve.

With respect to Lamb's personal habits, much has been said of his intemperance; and his biographer justly remarks that a false impression prevails upon this subject. In eating he was peculiarly temperate; and, with respect to drinking, though his own admirable wit (as in that delightful letter to Mr. Carey where he describes himself, when confided to the care of some youthful protector, as "an old reprobate Telemachus consigned to the guidance of a wise young Mentor") —though, I say, his own admirable wit has held up too bright a torch to the illumination of his own infirmities, so that no efforts of pious friendship could now avail to disguise the truth, yet it must not be forgotten—1st, That we are not to imagine Lamb's frailty in this respect habitual or deliberate—he made many powerful resistances to temptation; 2dly, he often succeeded for long seasons in practising entire abstinence; 3dly, when he *did* yield to the mingled temptation of wine, social pleasure, and the expansion of his own brotherly heart, that prompted him to entire sympathy with those around him (and it cannot be denied that for any one

man to preserve an absolute sobriety amongst a jovial company wears too much the churlish air of playing the spy upon the privileged extravagances of festive mirth)—whenever this *did* happen, Lamb, never, to my knowledge, passed the bounds of an agreeable elevation. He was joyous, radiant with wit and frolic, mounting with the sudden motion of a rocket into the highest heaven of outrageous fun and absurdity ; then bursting into a fiery shower of puns, chasing syllables with the agility of a squirrel bounding amongst the trees, or a cat pursuing its own tail ; but, in the midst of all this stormy gaiety, he never said or did anything that could by possibility wound or annoy. The most noticeable feature in his intoxication was the suddenness with which it ascended to its meridian. Half a dozen glasses of wine taken during dinner—for everybody was encouraged, by his sunshiny kindness, to ask *him* to take wine—these, with perhaps one or two after dinner, sufficed to complete his inebriation to the crisis of sleep ; after awaking from which, so far as I know, he seldom recommenced drinking. This sudden consummation of the effects was not, perhaps, owing to a weaker (as Sergeant Talfourd supposes), but rather to a more delicate and irritable, system than is generally found amongst men. The sensibility of his organization was so exquisite that effects which travel by separate stages with most other men in him fled along the nerves with the velocity of light. He had great merit in his frequent trials of abstinence ; for the day lost its most golden zest when he had not the genial evening on which to fasten his anticipations. True, his mornings were physically more comfortable upon this system ; but then, unfortunately, that mode of pleasure was all reaped and exhausted in the act of enjoyment, whilst the greater pleasure of anticipation, *that* (as he complained himself) was wanting unavoidably, because the morning unhappily comes at the wrong end of the day ; so that you may indeed look back to it as something which you have lost through the other hours of the day, but you can never look forward to it as something which is coming.

It is for ever to be regretted that so many of Lamb's jests, repartees, and pointed sayings, should have perished irrecoverably ; and, from their fugitive brilliancy, which (as

Sergeant Talfourd remarks) often dazzled too much to allow of the memory coolly retracing them some hours afterwards, it is also to be regretted that many have been improperly reported. One, for instance, which had been but half told to his biographer, was more circumstantially and more effectually related thus, in my hearing, at Professor Wilson's, by Dr. Bowring, soon after the occasion. It occurred at Mr. Coleridge's weekly party at Highgate. Somebody had happened to mention that letter of Dr. Pococke upon the Arabic translation of Grotius de Veritate Fidei Christ. in which he exposes the want of authority for the trite legend of Mahomet's pigeon, and justly insists upon the necessity of expunging a fable so certain to disgust learned Mussulmans, before the books were circulated in the East. This occasioned a conversation generally upon the Mahometan creed, theology, and morals; in the course of which some young man, introduced by Edward Irving, had thought fit to pronounce a splendid declamatory eulogium upon Mahomet and all his doctrines. This, as a pleasant extravagance, had amused all present. Some hours after, when the party came to separate, this philo-Mahometan missed his hat, upon which, whilst a general search for it was going on, Lamb, turning to the stranger, said—"Hat, sir!—your hat! Don't you think you came in a turban?" The fact that the hat *was* missing, which could not have been anticipated by Lamb, shows his readiness, and so far improves the Sergeant's version of the story.

Finally, without attempting, in this place, any elaborate analysis of Lamb's merits (which would be no easy task), one word or two may be said generally about the position he is entitled to hold in our literature, and, comparatively, in European literature. His biographer thinks that Lamb had more points of resemblance to Professor Wilson than to any other eminent person of the day. It would be presumptuous to dismiss too hastily any opinion put forward by the author of "Ion"; otherwise, I confess that, for my own part, knowing both parties most intimately, I cannot perceive much closer resemblance than what must always be found between two men of genius; whilst the differences seem to me radical.

To notice only two points, Professor Wilson's mind is, in its movement and style of feeling, eminently diffusive—Lamb's discontinuous and abrupt. Professor Wilson's humour is broad, overwhelming, riotously opulent—Lamb's is minute, delicate, and scintillating. In one feature, though otherwise as different as possible, Lamb resembles Sir Walter Scott—viz. in the dramatic character of his mind and taste. Both of them recoiled from the high ideality of such a mind as Milton's; both loved the mixed standards of the world as it is—the dramatic standards in which good and evil are intermingled; in short, that class of composition in which a *human* character is predominant. Hence, also, in the great national movements, and the revolutionary struggles, which, in our times, have gone on in so many interesting parts of the world, neither Sir Walter Scott nor Lamb much sympathized, nor much affected to sympathize, with the aspirations after some exaltation for human nature by means of liberty, or the purification of legal codes or of religious creeds. They were content with things as they are; and, in the dramatic interest attached to these old realities, they found sufficient gratification for all their sensibilities. In one thing, upon consideration, there *does* strike me some resemblance between Lamb and Professor Wilson—viz. in the absence of affectation, and the courageous sincerity which belong to both; and also, perhaps, as Sergeant Talfourd has remarked, in the comprehensiveness of their liberality towards all, however opposed to themselves, who have any intellectual distinctions to recommend them.

But, recurring to the question I have suggested, of Lamb's general place in literature, I shall content myself with indicating my own views of that point, without, however, pausing to defend them. In the literature of every nation, we are naturally disposed to place in the highest rank those who have produced some great and colossal work—a "Paradise Lost," a "Hamlet," a "Novum Organum"—which presupposes an effort of intellect, a comprehensive grasp, and a sustaining power, for its original conception, corresponding in grandeur to that effort, different in kind, which must preside in its execution. But, after this highest class, in which the power to conceive

and the power to execute are upon the same scale of grandeur, there comes a second, in which brilliant powers of execution, applied to conceptions of a very inferior range, are allowed to establish a classical rank. Every literature possesses, besides its great national gallery, a cabinet of minor pieces, not less perfect in their polish, possibly more so. In reality, the characteristic of this class is elaborate perfection—the point of inferiority is not in the finishing, but in the compass and power of the original creation, which (however exquisite in its class) moves within a smaller sphere. To this class belong, for example, "The Rape of the Lock," that finished jewel of English literature; "The Dunciad" (a still more exquisite gem); "The Vicar of Wakefield," (in its earlier part); in German, the "Luise" of Voss; in French — what? Omitting some others that might be named, above all others, the Fables of La Fontaine. He is the pet and darling, as it were, of the French Literature. Now, I affirm that Charles Lamb occupies a corresponding station to his own literature. I am not speaking (it will be observed) of kinds, but of degrees in literary merit; and Lamb I hold to be, as with respect to English literature, that which La Fontaine is with respect to French. For, though there may be little resemblance otherwise, in this they agree, that both were wayward and eccentric humorists; both confined their efforts to short flights; and both, according to the standards of their several countries, were, occasionally, and, in a lower key, poets. The brutal "Tales" of La Fontaine do not merit to be considered in such an estimate; for they are simply vulgar and obscene jokes thrown into a metrical version, and are never treated, as indeed they rarely could be treated, poetically. The "Fables"[1] are a work of more pretension; and throughout

[1] By the way, it has been made a matter of some wonder in the annals of literature, why La Fontaine was amongst the very few eminent writers of that age who did not bask in the court sunshine; and La Harpe, with many others, fancies that his "Tales" excluded him. But there is no wonder to those who are acquainted with his "Fables." The ludicrous picture which he constantly presents of courts, and courtiers, and royalty—in treating many of those fables which relate to the lion, &c.—must have confounded and mortified the pompous, scenical Louis XIV more than the most audacious acts of

the works of La Fontaine there is an occasional felicity in the use of conversational phrases and conversational forms. But, if any reader would wish to see the difference between an inspired writer and a merely *naïf* writer of unusual cleverness—if he would wish to see the magical effects that may be produced upon the simplest incidents by a truly poetic treatment—I would recommend to his notice the fable of the oak and the broom, as told by Wordsworth, with one on the same subject by La Fontaine. In the one fable, such a soul is introduced beneath the ribs of what else are lifeless symbols, that, instead of a somewhat comic effect, the reader is not surprised to find a pensive morality breathing from the whole, and a genuine pathos attained, though couched in symbolic images. But in La Fontaine we find, as usual, levity in the treatment, levity in the result, and his highest attainment lying in the *naïveté* or picturesque raciness of his expressions.

Wordsworth, however, it will be said, is not Lamb. No; but Lamb, although upon a lower scale, has something of the same difference in point of feeling; and his impulses, like those of Wordsworth, are derived from the depths of nature, not from the surfaces of manners. We need not, indeed, wonder at the profounder feeling, and the more intense, as well as consistent, originality of Lamb, when we contrast his character, disposition, life, and general demeanour, as I have here endeavoured to sketch them, with what we know of La Fontaine, viewed under the same aspects. Not only was La Fontaine a vicious and heartless man, but it may be said of him, with perfect truth, that his whole life was a lie, and a piece of hollow masquerading. By some accident, he had gained the character of an absent man; and, for the sake of sustaining this distinction, with the poor result of making sport for his circle, he committed extravagances which argue equal defect of good sense and sincere feeling in him who was the actor and in those who accredited them. A man who could seriously affect not to recognise his own son, and to put questions about him as about a stranger, must have been thoroughly wanting in truth of character. And we

rebellion, and could not have been compensated by the hollow formality of a few stilted dedicatory addresses.

may be assured that no depth of feeling in any walk of literature or poetry ever grew upon the basis of radical affectation. The very substratum of Lamb's character, as I have said before, lay in the most intense hostility to affectation. This, however, touches the *quality* of their social merits; and at present I am merely concerned with the *degree;* having selected La Fontaine as that one amongst the French classics who best expresses by analogy the true position and relative rank which the voice of posterity will assign to Charles Lamb in the literature of his own country. His works—I again utter my conviction—will be received as amongst the most elaborately finished gems of literature; as cabinet specimens which express the utmost delicacy, purity, and tenderness of the national intellect, together with the rarest felicity of finish and expression, although it may be the province of other modes of literature to exhibit the highest models in the grandeur and more impassioned forms of intellectual power. Such is my own intimate conviction; and, accordingly, I reckon it amongst the rarest accidents of good fortune which have gilded my literary experience, that, although residing too often at a vast distance from the metropolis to benefit by my opportunities so much as I desired, yet, by cultivating those which fell naturally in my way at various periods, but, most of all, at that period when I may consider my judgment to have been maturest, I reaped so much delight from that intercourse, and so far improved it into a fraternal familiarity, as to warrant me in assuming the honourable distinction of having been a friend of Charles Lamb.[1]

[1] Among the prominent characteristics of Lamb, I know not how it is that I have omitted to notice the peculiar emphasis and depth of his courtesy. This quality was in him a really chivalrous feeling, springing from his heart, and cherished with the sanctity of a duty. He says somewhere in speaking of himself, under the mask of a third person, whose character he is describing, that, in passing a servant girl even at a street-crossing, he used to take off his hat. Now, the *spirit* of Lamb's gallantry would have prompted some such expression of homage, though the customs of the country would not allow it to be *literally* fulfilled, for the very reason that would prompt it—viz. in order to pay respect—since the girl would, in such a case, suppose a man laughing at her. But the instinct of his heart was to think highly of female nature, and to pay a real homage (not the

hollow demonstration of outward honour, which a Frenchman calls his "homage," and which is really a mask for contempt) to the sacred *idea* of pure and virtuous womanhood. The one sole case I remember in which Lamb was betrayed into—not discourtesy—no, that could not be—but into a necessity of publicly professing a hostile feeling, was in the letter (now we may say *celebrated* letter) to Mr. Southey. To this, however, he was driven not by any hostile feeling towards Southey, but simply by a feeling too animated of sympathy with those who happened to be on questions of public interest hostile to Southey. Lamb, it must be remembered, was—that is, he called himself—a dissenter. Was he such in reality?—Not at all. So far from adopting the distinctions of his religious party, he was not even thoroughly aware of them. But with Lamb it happened as with many another man: though careless of the distinctions which bound him to a party, still he was in profession faithful to his party, as a principle of honour. I know many men at this day who, if left to choose a form of religion—left unfettered by old family connexions—would much prefer connecting themselves with the Church of England. But they are restrained and kept loyal to their section of dissent, not by religious considerations, but by worldly honour; the appealing look of the clergyman, resting perhaps his influence one half upon old household recollections—upon the father whom he counselled, the grandfather he prayed with. Such look, such recollections, who could resist—who ought to resist? The only plan is this: when the old minister dies—in the interregnum, whilst as yet the new minister is not—bolt, cut and run. Lamb's situation was difficult; Southey assures us that he knew himself to be wrong: he did not. *Your penitent* Lamb was for the ear of Southey—he never meant it for the world.

[Lamb's "celebrated letter to Southey," mentioned by De Quincey in this note, was published, with the signature "Elia," in the *London Magazine* for October 1823. It was a long and severe remonstrance with Southey, on account of the sneering tone in which the *Quarterly Review* always spoke of such friends of Lamb as Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt, and more especially on account of this phrase respecting Lamb's own *Essays of Elia*, which Southey had used in a *Quarterly* article of his,—"*A book which wants only a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original.*" Hardly had the letter appeared when Southey, visiting London, and desiring to make up the quarrel, offered to call on Lamb. It was then that Lamb, relenting, sent to Southey the private letter, dated 21st Nov. 1823, to which De Quincey also refers. It began, "Dear Southey, the kindness of your note has melted away the mist which was upon me," and ended, "Your penitent C. Lamb." A full account of the affair, with copies of both letters, will be found in Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt's edition of the *Letters of Charles Lamb*, vol. ii. pp. 141-161.—M.]

CHAPTER III

WALKING STEWART

First Article [1]

In London, for a space of fifteen or twenty years, the most interesting by far of all my friends, and, singly, a sufficient magnet to draw me in that direction sometimes when I had no other motive for such a journey, was the celebrated Peripatetic, John Stewart, commonly called "Walking Stewart." This man was indeed, in many respects, a more interesting person than any I have known amongst those distinguished by accomplishments of the same kind.

He was by birth a Scotsman: but it was little indeed that he owed to the land of his nativity; for he had been early turned adrift, and thrown altogether upon his own resources.[2] At school, as he often told me with high glee, and even with something of gratified vanity in the avowal, no boy except himself was considered an invincible dunce, or what is sometimes called a Bergen-op-zoom; that is, a head impregnable to all teaching and all impressions that could be conveyed through books. Erudition, in fact, and classical or philological learning of every kind, he thoroughly despised; nor could he have been won by kindness even to take an

[1] From *Tait's Magazine* for October 1840.—M.

[2] For more exact particulars respecting Stewart's parentage, &c., see editorial note appended to this chapter of De Quincey's Reminiscences.—M.

interest in studies from which his mind naturally revolted; and thus, like many a boy before him, he obtained the reputation of a dunce, merely because his powers were never called into action or tried amongst tasks in which he took any genial delight. Yet this same scoffing-stock of the school, when summoned away to the tasks of life, dealing with subjects that interested his feelings, and moving in an element for which his natural powers had qualified him, displayed the energetic originality of genius. He went out to Bengal as a servant of the Company in a civil capacity, and, for some time, was viewed both as an aspiring young man and as a young man of great promise: but, suddenly, some strong scruples of conscience seized him, with regard to the tenure of the Company's Indian empire, and to the mode in which it was administered. Simply upon the impulse of these scruples, doubtless ill-founded, he quitted the Company's service, and entered that of a native prince—I think the Nawaub of Arcot: him he served in the office of secretary. And, finally, quitting this service also, chiefly, I conjecture, because the instinct of migration and of rambling was strong upon him, he commenced that long course of pedestrian travelling which thenceforwards occupied the active years of his life: in fact, from perhaps the age of twenty-three to fifty-eight or sixty. A navigator who has accomplished the *periplus* (*πεϱιπλοῦς*) of the globe, we call a *circumnavigator;* and, by parity of reason, we might call a man in the circumstances of Mr. Stewart, viz. one who has walked round the *terra firma* of the globe, from Kamtschatka to Paraguay, and from Paraguay to Lapland, a *circumperipatetic* (or, if the reader objects to this sort of tautology in the *circum* and the *peri*, a *circumambulator*). A terrestrial globe, representing the infinite wanderings of Mr. Stewart, would have seemed belted and zoned in all latitudes, like a Ptolemaic globe of the heavens, with cycles and epicycles, approaching, crossing, traversing, coinciding, receding. No region, pervious to human feet, except, I think, China and Japan, but had been visited by Mr. Stewart in this philosophic style; a style which compels a man to move slowly through a country, and to fall in continually with the natives of that country, in a degree far beyond what is possible for the

traveller in carriages and palanquins,[1] or mounted on horses, mules, or camels.

It may be presumed of any man who has travelled so extensively, and has thrown himself so fearlessly, for five or eight and thirty years, amongst men of all nations and in all degrees of civilization, that he must often have found himself in situations of great and sudden danger. In fact, Walking Stewart, like the famous Ledyard, used to look back upon the hardships, the sufferings, and the risks he had undergone as too romantic for rehearsal. People would imagine, as he thought, that he was using the traveller's immemorial privilege of embellishing; and, accordingly, as one foremost feature in the character of John Stewart was his noble reverence for truth, so that, to have won a universal interest with the public, he would not have deviated, by one hair's breadth, from the severe facts of a case; for that reason it was rare that he would be persuaded to relate any part of his adventures which approached the marvellous. Being so sincerely and profoundly veracious, he was jealous even of being suspected to be otherwise, though it were in a trifling question, or by a shadow of exaggeration. Yet, unwilling as he was to report his own adventurous hazards, or the escapes which, doubtless, he often owed to his own address, courage, or presence of mind, one general remark I have often heard him make, and with great energy; a remark abstracted from all his dangers collectively, though he would not refer to them separately and individually: it is a remark which ought to be put on record for the honour of human nature; and it should be viewed in the light of a testimony given by a witness whose opportunities for collecting a fair evidence must far have exceeded those of all other men, making no exception in favour of any nation or any century. His remark was this—that, although in barbarous countries, with no police or organized provisions whatsoever for the protection of human life and property, many violent and licentious aggressions would, doubtless, be committed, under

[1] Dawk-travelling in a palanquin has been so much improved of late throughout India that ninety miles a day may be accomplished in favourable weather, and, if the bearers are laid carefully, one hundred. With this velocity, and this seclusion, little can be seen.

circumstances of temptation or of provocation, upon the weak or defenceless stranger, yet, in the whole course of his experience, he had never known one case where the rudest savage of the wildest tribes had violated an *understood* trust reposed in his forbearance. It was generally supposed, he said, that the civilized traveller amongst savages might lay his account with meeting unprovoked violence, except in so far as he carried arms for his protection. Now, he had found it by much the safer plan to carry no arms. That he had never found, and did not believe that in travels ten times more extensive he ever should have found, a human being so base as to refuse (provided he could be made *clearly to understand*) the appeal made to his generosity by a fellow-being, in boldly throwing himself upon his justice or hospitality; and, if a different creed prevailed often amongst nautical people, it was owing (he contended) to the extreme levity and thoughtlessness of sailors. Indeed, the records of voyages, and, very recently, the records of our new settlements in Australia, teem with instances where feuds through a whole generation (wanton and causeless as they may seem to many of those who merely *inherit* the consequences) have been originally provoked by a cruel or cowardly salutation from firearms to a party of natives, advancing, perhaps, in a tumultuous manner, alarming to the timid or the inexperienced, but with intentions perfectly pacific.

Walking Stewart was, in conversation, the most eloquent man—limiting[1] the meaning to the eloquence of nature, unsustained by any range of illustration from books—that I have ever known. Nor was I singular in this opinion; for Mr. Wordsworth, the poet, said something to the same effect, in speaking of the political harangues which he was in the habit of making about the time of the French Revolution. And, little as he occupied himself with books as a reader, by a strange inversion of the ordinary human relations to literature, he—this rare and slight reader—was largely connected

[1] Another example of what I have already noted once or twice as the most recurring form, if not the only recurring form, of questionable grammar in De Quincey—viz. the unrelated or misrelated participle. "Limiting" stands for "if we limit"; and, though this participial usage is customary, it jars on strict grammatical taste.—M.

with books as an author. Apparently, he read little or nothing but what he wrote himself; books treating of man, his nature, his expectations, and his duties, in a desultory style; mingling much profound philosophy with many absurd or whimsical theories of physiology, or equally chimerical hypotheses of health and the modes of preserving it.[1] Animal food or wine he never allowed himself to use; or, in fact, anything but the Brahminical diet of milk, fruit, and bread. It is saying little in favour of his system to mention that he, in his own person, enjoyed a cloudless health; for so he would have done under any diet, with the same quantity of bodily exercise, and enjoying the same original hardness of constitution and athletic frame of body. Latterly his sole pleasure was music; and it grieved me to find, therefore, towards the close of his life, that he was growing exceedingly deaf: but this defect of hearing he remedied partially by purchasing an organ of considerable size and power.

Walking Stewart had purchased, in his younger days, an

[1] The following list of the writings of Walking Stewart, only some of them dated, is from Bohn's edition of Lowndes's *Bibliographer's Manual*:—*Travels over the most interesting parts of the Globe, to discover the Source of Moral Motion; The Apocalypse of Nature, wherein the Source of Moral Motion is discovered and a Moral System established* (1790); *The Revolution of Reason; The Moral World Displayed; The Book, or Continuation of the Moral World* (1793); *The Tocsin of Britannia, with a Novel Plan for a Constitutional Army* (1794); *The Second Peal of the Tocsin of Britannia* (1794); *Good Sense addressed to the English Nation* (1794); *The Tocsin of Social Life, addressed to all Nations of the Civilised World* (1803); *Opus Maximum, or a Great Essay to reduce the Moral World from Contingency to System* (1803); *The Conquest of the Moral World; The Important and Infallible Secret of Victory, to render British Soldiers and British Citizens invincible in their Island and the Protectors of Civilised Life* (1807); *Revelation of Reason and Nature; Apocalypse of Human Perfectibility* (1808); *Philosophy of Human Society* (1810); *The Traveller the only Man of Nature that ever appeared in the World* (1810); *Dawn of Sense* (1810); *The Roll of a Tennis Ball through the Moral World* (1812); *Book of Nature: In the 7000 year of Astronomical History from the Chinese Tables; Book of Intellectual Life, or Sun of the Moral World; The Lyre of Apollo; Sophiometer, or Regulator of Mental Power; Scripture of Reason and Nature; Système Nouveau de la Philosophie Physique, Morale, Politique, et Speculative* (1815); *Philosophy of Sense* (1816). Mr. Bohn states that most of these writings were printed for private distribution only.—M.

annuity, which, in fact, for many years, constituted his sole dependence. The tables of mortality were very imperfect at that time, and the Insurance Offices made many losing contracts; amongst which was Mr. Stewart's. He had long been viewed by the office as one of their bad bargains; and he had a playful malice in presenting himself annually to establish his continued existence. The office was always in a roar of laughter when he made his entry: for the Directors protested that he had already lived too long by twenty years for their interest; and he, on his part, ascribing his robust health to his peculiar diet, threatened them with living at least twenty years longer. He did, certainly, wear all the promise of doing so; for his eye was as brilliant and his cheek as fresh as those of men forty years younger. But he did not quite redeem the pledges of his appearance. A few years before his death, he gained an important suit against the East India Company. How that should have hastened his death, I cannot conjecture; for so thoroughly had his simple diet become necessary to his comfort, and a matter of cordial preference, that no entreaties of a friend would persuade him to take a glass of wine or spirits. A man more temperate never existed, nor a man in all respects of more philosophic habits, or more entire independence. I and others, who would not have insulted him with the offer of money, yet, knowing at one time the extreme slenderness of his resources, attempted to send him books and a few other luxuries, by way of relieving the weariness (as we feared) of his long solitary evenings in the heart of tumultuous London. But, though taking our attentions kindly, he uniformly repelled them; nor ever, in one instance, would accept of anything that might bring his perfect independence into question. He died when I was absent from London; and I could never learn the circumstances: for he had, I believe, no relatives; and his opulence, during the latter years of his life would be likely to throw him into the hands of strangers.[1] His books are filled with extravagances on all subjects; and, to religious people, they are especially revolting, by the uniform spirit of contempt which

[1] He died in 1822. See editorial note appended to this chapter.—M.

he manifests for all creeds alike — Christian, Mahometan, Buddhist, Pagan. In fact, he was as deliberate and resolute an Atheist as can ever have existed: but, for all that, and although wishing, for his own sake, that he had been a more religious man, or at least had felt a greater reverence for such subjects, and a closer sympathy with that which, for so vast a majority of the human race, must ever constitute their sole consolation under sorrow and calamity, still I could not close my eyes to the many evidences which his writings and his conversation afforded of a true grandeur of mind, and of a calm Spinosistic state of contemplative reverie. In fact, he was half crazy. But his mind, like a shell taken from the sea, still echoed and murmured to the multitudinous sounds and forms amongst which his former years had been passed. The many nations amongst whom he had walked, "passing like night" (as the Ancient Mariner describes himself) "from land to land,"—the black men, and the white men, and the "dusk-faces with white silken turbants wreathed,"—were present for ever, and haunted his inner eye with imagery of the noblest kind, and with moving pageantries, in the midst of silence and years of deafness. He was himself a fine specimen of the animal Man. And, in some directions, he was fine also intellectually. His books, which are past counting, ought to be searched, and a bead-roll of fine thoughts, or eloquent expressions of old ones, separated from the eccentric speculations with which they too often lie interwoven. These books contain, moreover, some very wise practical suggestions, particularly as to the mode of warfare adapted to the British nation. And for knowledge of national character he was absolutely unrivalled. Some time or other, I may myself draw up a memoir of his life, and raise a tribute to his memory by a series of extracts such as I have suggested.

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[1] The gap indicated by this line of dots is filled up in the original by De Quincey's reminiscences of Edward Irving and by a digression concerning Wordsworth. As these have nothing to do with Walking Stewart, they will follow in this volume more conveniently as independent chapters; and we retain here only that concluding portion of the present paper in which De Quincey reverts to Walking Stewart. —M.

In these sketches (written with so much hurry as in no one instance that I remember to have allowed me time for once reading over a single paragraph of what I had written) I have usually thought it best, in the few cases where I had afterwards an opportunity of correcting the press errors, simply to restore the word which it was probable or apparent that I had originally written, or which at least I must have meant to write. Changes more extensive than this it could not be advisable to make, in a case where I had no opening for a thorough recast of the whole. Even in those instances where a thought, or an expression, or a statement of facts, might be calculated to do me some little injury, unless it were expanded, or accompanied with an explanation, or more cautiously restricted, I thought it better on the whole to abide the hazard; placing my reliance for the redress of any harsh judgment on the absolute certainty that each successive month washes out of the public mind every trace of what may have occupied it in any previous month. But, in this sketch of *Walking Stewart*, there is something which demands a more instant explanation; for it happens that, at this moment of revising the press errors, an anecdote occurs to me, which illustrates the danger, in such a case, of a permanent misconstruction. Many years ago, I was spending a few days at the country-house of a foreign merchant. His wife, a very intelligent, and even intellectual person, came to me one morning with a book in her hand, of which several leaves had been torn into fragments. Her features, generally placid and amiable, wore an expression of matronly scorn. She blushed, but it was more with indignation than with feminine shame, as she put the book into my hands. It was mine, she said, my property; and therefore she had not tossed it into the fire. One of her infant children had found it, and had dealt with it as I saw: "and, if the child had destroyed the whole of it, she could not think that I was much entitled to complain." It was one of my Peripatetic friend's essays, under some such title as *The Apocalypse of Nature*, *or*, *The Revelation of Reason*.

This accident, directing my eye to the part of the volume which had been injured, reminded me of a fact which other-

wise I had naturally enough forgotten: viz. that Walking Stewart had occasionally touched on subjects quite unfitted for a public treatment; or, at least, as questions for philosophic speculation, calling for the disguise of a learned language. I made my peace with the lady by assuring her, first, that (this particular volume being one of many by the same author) I had not been aware of the gross passages which appeared to disfigure it near the end; and, secondly (which part of my apology it is that I now direct to my readers), that my personal knowledge of the man modified to my mind the doctrines of the author. Things said broadly and coarsely, which could not but shock strangers, to *my* interpretation, were blunted and defeated in their effect by the private knowledge I had of the writer's ultimate object, and of the inartificial mode in which he dealt with his native language. Language was too complex a machine for his management. He had never been an accurate scholar; and his idiom had entangled itself with the many exotic idioms which at times he had used familiarly for years.

Under the spirit of this general apology, I beg to shelter whatever I may have asserted of Mr. Stewart as a philosophic speculator. He was a man religious by temperament and the tendency of all his feelings; yet it is true that his mere understanding, yielding itself up to speculations which he could not manage, has prompted the most scornful expressions towards all doctrinal religions alike. He was pure and temperate in his habits of life beyond the common standard of men; yet his page was sometimes stained with sentiments too gross and animal. Ignorant of philosophy in its forms and terminology, he was, by capacity of profound reverie, a true philosopher—in the sense that he felt his way to truths greater and deeper than he could always explain; and, finally, though his books are filled with strong (oftentimes harsh) truths, he was, as a man, the most comprehensively benign, the most largely in sympathy with human nature, of any whom I have yet known. He passed his latter years in utter deafness (in noticing which let me observe that the image of the shell which I have used, though not consciously at the moment of writing taken from Wordsworth's "Excursion," or from Mr. Savage Landor's "Gebir," must have

been derived from one or other of those poems); he was deaf, as respected any music that could come to *him* from the world; and he was also dumb, as respected any music that could reach the world from *him;* so profound was his inability to explain himself, except at times, in conversation. Actually, therefore, he will be lost and forgotten. Potentially, he was a great man.

CHAPTER III

WALKING STEWART

Second Article[1]

He was a man of very extraordinary genius. He has generally been treated by those who have spoken of him in print as a madman. But this is a mistake, and must have been founded chiefly on the titles of his books.[2] He was a man of fervid mind, and of sublime aspirations: but he was no madman; or, if he was, then I say that it is so far desirable to be a madman. In 1798 or 1799, when I must have been about thirteen to fourteen years old, Walking Stewart was in Bath—where my family at that time resided. He frequented the pump-room, and I believe all public places—walking up and down, and dispersing his philosophic opinions to the right and the left, like a Grecian philosopher. The first time I saw him was at a concert in the Upper Rooms; he was pointed out to me by one of my party as a very eccentric man who had walked over the habitable globe. I remember

[1] Though here entitled "Second Article," because it will now be most fitly read after the preceding, this was, in fact, the earlier of De Quincey's two papers on the subject. It appeared originally in the *London Magazine* for September 1823, as "No. I." of the series of articles contributed by De Quincey to that periodical under the general title of "Notes from the Pocket-Book of a late Opium-Eater," and with the signature X. Y. Z. It was revised by De Quincey, with slight verbal alterations, for Vol. VIII. of the Edinburgh collective edition of his writings, published in 1858; and it is here reprinted from that text.—M.

[2] See footnote, *ante*, p. 97.—M.

that Madame Mara was at that moment singing; and Walking Stewart, who was a true lover of music (as I afterwards came to know), was hanging upon her notes like a bee upon a jessamine flower. His countenance was striking, and expressed the union of benignity with philosophic habits of thought. In such health had his pedestrian exercises preserved him, connected with his abstemious mode of living, that, though he must at that time have been considerably above forty, he did not look older than twenty-eight; at least the face which remained upon my recollection for some years was that of a young man. Nearly ten years afterwards I became acquainted with him. During the interval, I had picked up one of his works in Bristol—viz., his "Travels to discover the Source of Moral Motion," the second volume of which is entitled, "The Apocalypse of Nature." I had been greatly impressed by the sound and original views which, in the first volume, he had taken of the national characters throughout Europe. In particular, he was the first, and, so far as I know, the only, writer who had noticed the profound error of ascribing a phlegmatic character to the English nation. "English phlegm" is the constant expression of authors, when contrasting the English with the French. Now, the truth is that, beyond that of all other nations, it has a substratum of profound passion: and, if we are to recur to the old doctrine of temperaments, the English character must be classed, not under the *phlegmatic*, but under the *melancholic*, temperament, and the French under the *sanguine*. The character of a nation may be judged of, in this particular, by examining its idiomatic language. The French, in whom the lower forms of passion are constantly bubbling up from the shallow and superficial character of their feelings, have appropriated all the phrases of passion to the service of trivial and ordinary life: and hence they have no language of passion for the service of poetry, or of occasions really demanding it: for it has been already enfeebled by continual association with cases of an unimpassioned order. But a character of deeper passion has a perpetual standard in itself, by which, as by an instinct, it tries all cases, and rejects the language of passion as disproportionate and ludicrous where it is not fully justified. "Ah Heavens!" or "Oh my God!"

are exclamations, with us, so exclusively reserved for cases of profound interest, that, on hearing a woman even (*i.e.*, a person of the sex most easily excited) utter such words, we look round, expecting to see her child in some situation of danger. But in France, "*Ah Ciel!*" and "*Oh mon Dieu!*" are uttered by every woman if a mouse does but run across the floor. The ignorant and the thoughtless, however, will continue to class the English character under the phlegmatic temperament, whilst the philosopher will perceive that it is the exact polar antithesis to a phlegmatic character. In this conclusion, though otherwise expressed and illustrated, Walking Stewart's view of the English character will be found to terminate: and his opinion is especially valuable—first, and chiefly, because he was a philosopher; secondly, because his acquaintance with man, civilised and uncivilised, under all national distinctions, was absolutely unrivalled. Meantime, this and others of his opinions were expressed in language that, if literally construed, would often appear insane or absurd. The truth is, his long intercourse with foreign nations had given something of a hybrid tincture to his diction; in some of his works, for instance, he uses the French word *hélas!* uniformly for the English *alas!* and apparently with no consciousness of his mistake. He had also this singularity about him, that he was everlastingly metaphysicising against metaphysics. To me, who was buried in metaphysical reveries from my earliest days, this was not likely to be an attraction, any more than the vicious structure of his diction was likely to please my scholar-like taste. All grounds of disgust, however, gave way before my sense of his powerful merits; and, as I have said, I sought his acquaintance.

Coming up to London from Oxford about 1807 or 1808, I made inquiries about him, and found that he usually read the papers at a coffee-room in Piccadilly: understanding that he was poor, it struck me that he might not wish to receive visits at his lodgings, and therefore I sought him at the coffee-room. Here I took the liberty of introducing myself to him. He received me courteously, and invited me to his rooms, which at that time were in Sherrard Street, Golden Square—a street already memorable to me. I was much

struck with the eloquence of his conversation; and afterwards I found that Mr. Wordsworth, himself the most eloquent of men in conversation, had been equally struck, when he had met him at Paris between the years 1790 and 1792, during the early storms of the French Revolution. In Sherrard Street I visited him repeatedly, and took notes of the conversations I had with him on various subjects. These I must have somewhere or other; and I wish I could introduce them here, as they would interest the reader. Occasionally, in these conversations, as in his books, he introduced a few notices of his private history: in particular, I remember his telling me that in the East Indies he had been a prisoner of Hyder's; that he had escaped with some difficulty; and that, in the service of one of the native princes as secretary or interpreter, he had accumulated a small fortune. This must have been too small, I fear, at that time to allow him even a philosopher's comforts: for some part of it, invested in the French funds, had been confiscated. I was grieved to see a man of so much ability, of gentlemanly manners and refined habits, and with the infirmity of deafness, suffering under such obvious privations; and I once took the liberty, on a fit occasion presenting itself, of requesting that he would allow me to send him some books which he had been casually regretting that he did not possess—for I was at that time in the heyday of my worldly prosperity. This offer, however, he declined with firmness and dignity, though not unkindly. And I now mention it because I have seen him charged in print with a selfish regard to his own pecuniary interest. On the contrary, he appeared to me a very liberal and generous man: and I well remember that, whilst on his own part he refused to accept of anything, he compelled me to receive as presents all the books which he published during my acquaintance with him. Two of these, corrected with his own hand—viz., the "Lyre of Apollo," and the "Sophiometer"—I have lately found amongst other books left in London; and others he forwarded to me in Westmoreland. In 1809 I saw him often. In the spring of that year I happened to be in London; and, Wordsworth's tract on the Convention of Cintra being at that time in the printer's hands, I superintended the publication

of it ; and, at Wordsworth's request, I added a long note on Spanish affairs, which is printed in the Appendix. The opinions I expressed in this note on the Spanish character, at that time much calumniated on the retreat to Corunna, then fresh in the public mind—above all, the contempt I expressed for the superstition in respect to the French military prowess, a superstition so dishonouring to ourselves, and so mischievous in its results, which was then at its height, and which gave way, in fact, only to the campaigns of 1814 and 1815—fell in, as it happened, with Mr. Stewart's political creed in those points where at that time it met with most opposition. In 1812 it was, I think, that I saw him for the last time : and, by the way, on the day of my parting with him, I had an amusing proof, in my own experience, of that sort of ubiquity ascribed to him by a witty writer in the "London Magazine." I met him and shook hands with him under Somerset House, telling him that I should leave town that evening for Westmoreland. Thence I went, by the very shortest road (*i.e.*, through Moor Street, Soho—for I am learned in many quarters of London), towards a point which necessarily led me through Tottenham Court Road : I stopped nowhere, and walked fast ; yet so it was that in Tottenham Court Road I was not overtaken by (*that* was comprehensible), but overtook, Walking Stewart. Certainly, as the above writer alleges, there must have been three Walking Stewarts in London. He seemed nowise surprised at this himself, but explained to me that somewhere or other in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road there was a little theatre, at which there was dancing, and occasionally good singing, between which and a neighbouring coffee-house he sometimes divided his evenings. Singing, it seems, he could hear in spite of his deafness. In this street I took my final leave of him ; it turned out such ; and, anticipating at the time that it would, I looked after his white hat at the moment it was disappearing, and exclaimed, "Farewell, thou half-crazy and most eloquent of men ! I shall never see thy face again." At that moment, I did not intend to visit London again for some years : as it happened, I was there for a short time in 1814 ; and then I heard, to my great satisfaction, that Walking Stewart had recovered a considerable sum (about £14,000,

I believe) from the East India Company; and, from the abstract given in the "London Magazine" of the memoir by his relation,[1] I have since learned that he applied this money most wisely to the purchase of an annuity, and that he "persisted in living" too long for the peace of an annuity office. So fare all companies, East and West, and all annuity offices, that stand opposed in interest to philosophers! In 1814, however, to my great regret, I did not see him; for I was then taking a great deal of opium, and never could contrive to issue to the light of day soon enough for a morning-call upon a philosopher of such early hours; and in the evening I concluded that he would be generally abroad, from what he had formerly communicated to me of his own habits. It seems, however, that he afterwards held *conversaziones* at his own rooms, and did not stir out to theatres quite so much. From a brother of mine, who at one time occupied rooms in the same house with him, I learned that, in other respects, he did not deviate in his prosperity from the philosophic tenor of his former life. He abated nothing of his peripatetic exercises; and repaired duly in the morning, as he had done in former years, to St. James's Park, where he sat in trance-like reverie amongst the cows, inhaling their balmy breath and pursuing his philosophic speculations. He had also purchased an organ, or more than one, with which he solaced his solitude, and beguiled himself of uneasy thoughts, if he ever had any.

The works of Walking Stewart must be read with some indulgence: the titles are generally too lofty and pretending, and somewhat extravagant; the composition is lax and unprecise, as I have before said; and the doctrines are occasionally very bold, incautiously stated, and too hardy and high-toned for the nervous effeminacy of many modern moralists. But Walking Stewart was a man who thought nobly of human nature: he wrote, therefore, at times, in the spirit and with the indignation of an ancient prophet against the oppressors and destroyers of the time. In particular, I

[1] De Quincey here refers to an obituary notice of Walking Stewart which had appeared in the *London Magazine* for November 1822, ten months before the appearance of his own present article in the same magazine. See note appended to this chapter.—M.

remember that, in one or more of the pamphlets which I received from him at Grasmere, he expressed himself in such terms on the subject of Tyrannicide (distinguishing the cases in which it was and was not lawful) as seemed to Wordsworth and myself every way worthy of a philosopher ; but, from the way in which that subject was treated in the House of Commons, where it was at that time occasionally introduced, it was plain that his doctrine was not fitted for the luxurious and relaxed morals of the age. Like all men who think nobly of human nature, Walking Stewart thought of it hopefully. In some respects his hopes were wisely grounded ; in others, they rested too much upon certain metaphysical speculations which are untenable, and which satisfied himself only, because his researches in that track had been purely self-originated and self-disciplined. He relied upon his own native strength of mind ; but, in questions which the wisdom and philosophy of every age, building successively upon each other, have not been able to settle, no mind, however strong, is entitled to build wholly upon itself. In many things he shocked the religious sense—especially as it exists in unphilosophic minds : he held a sort of rude and unscientific Spinosism ; and he expressed it coarsely, and in the way most likely to give offence. And indeed there can be no stronger proof of the utter obscurity in which his works have slumbered than that they should all have escaped prosecution. He also allowed himself to look too lightly and indulgently on the afflicting spectacle of female prostitution as it exists in London and in all great cities. This was the only point on which I was disposed to quarrel with him ; for I could not but view it as a greater reproach to human nature than the slave-trade, or any sight of wretchedness that the sun looks down upon. I often told him so ; and that I was at a loss to guess how a philosopher could allow himself to view it simply as part of the equipage of civil life, and not less reasonably making part of the establishment and furniture of a great city than police-offices, lamp-lighting, or newspapers. Waiving, however, this one instance of something like compliance with the brutal spirit of the world, on all other subjects he was eminently unworldly, child-like, simple-minded, and upright. He would flatter no man : even when addressing

nations it is almost laughable to see how invariably he prefaces his counsels with such plain truths, uttered in a manner so offensive, as must have defeated his purpose, if it had otherwise any chance of being accomplished. For instance, in addressing America, he begins thus :—"People of America! since your separation from the mother-country, your moral character has degenerated in the energy of thought and sense; produced by the absence of your association and intercourse with British officers and merchants: you have no moral discernment to distinguish between the protective power of England and the destructive power of France." And his letter to the Irish nation opens in this agreeable and conciliatory manner :—"People of Ireland! I address you as a true philosopher of nature, foreseeing the perpetual misery your irreflective character, and total absence of moral discernment, are preparing for," &c. The second sentence begins thus :—"You are sacrilegiously arresting the arm of your parent kingdom, fighting the cause of man and nature, when the triumph of the fiend of French police-terror would be your own instant extirpation." And the letter closes thus :—"I see but one awful alternative—that Ireland will be a perpetual moral volcano, threatening the destruction of the world, if the education and instruction of thought and sense shall not be able to generate the faculty of moral discernment among a very numerous class of the population, who detest the civic calm as sailors the natural calm, and make civic rights on which they cannot reason a pretext for feuds which they delight in." As he spoke freely and boldly to others, so he spoke loftily of himself. At p. 313 of the "Harp of Apollo," on making a comparison of himself with Socrates (in which he naturally gives the preference to himself), he styles the "Harp," &c., "this unparalleled work of human energy." At p. 315 he calls it "this stupendous work"; and, lower down, on the same page, he says, "I was turned out of school, at the age of fifteen, for a dunce or blockhead, because I would not stuff into my memory all the nonsense of erudition and learning; and, if future ages should discover the unparalleled energies of genius in this work, it will prove my most important doctrine—that the powers of the human mind must be developed in the education of thought and

sense in the study of moral opinion, not arts and science." Again, at p. 225 of his "Sophiometer," he says, "The paramount thought that dwells in my mind incessantly is a question I put to myself—whether, in the event of my personal dissolution by death, I have communicated all the discoveries my unique mind possesses in the great master-science of man and nature." In the next page, he determines that he *has*, with the exception of one truth—viz., "the latent energy, physical and moral, of human nature as existing in the British people." But here he was surely accusing himself without ground; for, to my knowledge, he has not failed, in any one of his numerous works, to insist upon this theme at least a billion of times. Another instance of his magnificent self-estimation is that in the title-pages of several of his works he announces himself as "John Stewart, the only Man of Nature[1] that ever appeared in the world."

By this time I am afraid the reader begins to suspect that he was crazy: and certainly, when I consider everything, he must have been crazy when the wind was at NNE; for who but Walking Stewart ever dated his books by a computation drawn—not from the Creation, not from the Flood, not from Nabonassar, or *ab urbe conditâ*, not from the Hegira—but from themselves, from their own day of publication, as constituting the one great era in the history of man by the side of which all other eras were frivolous and impertinent? Thus, in a work of his, given to me in 1812, and probably published in that year, I find him incidentally recording of himself that he was at that time "arrived at the age of sixty-three, with a firm state of health acquired by temperance, and a peace of mind almost independent of the vices of mankind—because my knowledge of life has enabled me to place my happiness beyond the reach or contact of other men's follies and passions, by avoiding all family connexions, and all ambitious pursuits of profit, fame, or power." On reading this passage, I was anxious to ascertain its date; but this,

[1] In Bath he was surnamed the "Child of Nature"; which arose from his contrasting, on every occasion, the existing man of our present experience with the ideal or Stewartian man that might be expected to emerge in some myriads of ages—to which latter man he gave the name of the Child of Nature.

on turning to the title-page, I found thus mysteriously expressed: "In the 7000th year of Astronomical History, and the first day of Intellectual Life or Moral World, from the era of this work." Another slight indication of craziness appeared in a notion which obstinately haunted his mind, that all the kings and rulers of the earth would confederate in every age against his works, and would hunt them out for extermination as keenly as Herod did the innocents of Bethlehem. On this consideration, fearing that they might be intercepted by the long arms of these wicked princes before they could reach that remote Stewartian man or his precursor to whom they were mainly addressed, he recommended to all those who might be impressed with a sense of their importance to bury a copy or copies of each work, properly secured from damp, &c., at a depth of seven or eight feet below the surface of the earth, and on their death-beds to communicate the knowledge of this fact to some confidential friends, who, in their turn, were to send down the tradition to some discreet persons of the next generation; and thus, if the truth was not to be dispersed for many ages, yet the knowledge that here and there the truth lay buried on this and that continent, in secret spots on Mount Caucasus, in the sands of Biledulgerid, and in hiding-places amongst the forests of America, and was to rise again in some distant age, and to vegetate and fructify for the universal benefit of man,—this knowledge at least was to be whispered down from generation to generation; and, in defiance of a myriad of kings crusading against him, Walking Stewart was to stretch out the influence of his writings through a long series of λαμπαδηφόροι[1] to that child of nature whom he saw dimly through a vista of many centuries. If this were madness, it seemed to me a somewhat sublime madness: and I assured him of my co-operation against the kings, promising that I would bury the "Harp of

[1] "λαμπαδηφόροι":—Lamp or torch bearers, the several parties to an obscure Grecian game. The essential point known to us moderns is that, in running, they passed on to each other a lighted torch, under what conditions, beyond that of keeping the torch burning, is very imperfectly explained. But already this feature of the game, without further details, qualifies the partakers in it to represent symbolically those who, from generation to generation, pass onwards the traditions of gathering knowledge.

Apollo" in my own orchard in Grasmere at the foot of Mount Fairfield, that I would bury the "Apocalypse of Nature" in one of the coves of Helvellyn, and several other works in several other places best known to myself. He accepted my offer with gratitude; but he then made known to me that he relied on my assistance for a still more important service—which was this: in the lapse of that vast number of ages that would probably intervene between the present period and the period at which his works would have reached their destination, he feared that the English language might itself have mouldered away. "No!" I said, "*that* was not probable: considering its extensive diffusion, and that it was now transplanted into all the continents of our planet, I would back the English language against any other on earth." His own persuasion, however, was, that the Latin was destined to survive all other languages; it was to be the eternal as well as the universal language; and his desire was that I should translate his works, or some part of them, into that language.[1] This I promised; and I seriously designed at some leisure hour to translate into Latin a selection of passages which should embody an abstract of his philosophy. This would have been doing a service to all those who might wish to see a digest of his peculiar opinions cleared from the perplexities of his peculiar diction, and brought into a narrow compass from the great number of volumes through which they are at present dispersed. However, like many another plan of mine, it went unexecuted.

[1] I was not aware until the moment of writing this passage that Walking Stewart had publicly made this request three years after making it to myself. Opening the "Harp of Apollo," I have just now accidentally stumbled on the following passage:—"This stupendous work is destined, I fear, to meet a worse fate than the aloe, which, as soon as it blossoms, loses its stalk. This first blossom of reason is threatened with the loss of both its stalk and its soil: for, if the revolutionary tyrant should triumph, he would destroy all the English books and energies of thought. I conjure my readers to translate this work into Latin, and to bury it in the ground, communicating on their death-beds only its place of concealment to men of nature."

From the title-page of this work, by the way, I learn that "the 7000th year of Astronomical History" is taken from the Chinese tables, and coincides (as I had supposed) with the year 1812 of our computation.

On the whole, if Walking Stewart were at all crazy, he was so in a way which did not affect his natural genius and eloquence—but rather exalted them. The old maxim, indeed, that "great wits to madness sure are near allied," the maxim of Dryden and the popular maxim, I have heard disputed by Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Wordsworth, who maintain that mad people are the dullest and most wearisome of all people. As a body, I believe they are so. But I must dissent from the authority of Messrs. Coleridge and Wordsworth so far as to distinguish. Where madness is connected, as it often is, with some miserable derangement of the stomach, liver, &c., and attacks the principle of pleasurable life, which is manifestly seated in the central organs of the body (*i.e.*, in the stomach and the apparatus connected with it), there it cannot but lead to perpetual suffering and distraction of thought; and there the patient will be often tedious and incoherent. People who have not suffered from any great disturbance in those organs are little aware how indispensable to the process of thinking are the momentary influxes of pleasurable feeling from the regular goings on of life in its primary function; in fact, until the pleasure is withdrawn or obscured, most people are not aware that they *have* any pleasure from the due action of the great central machinery of the system: proceeding in uninterrupted continuance, the pleasure as much escapes the consciousness as the act of respiration: a child, in the happiest stage of its existence, does not *know* that it is happy. And, generally, whatsoever is the level state of the hourly feeling is never put down by the unthinking (*i.e.*, by 99 out of 100) to the account of happiness: it is never put down with the positive sign, as equal to $+x$; but simply as $=0$. And men first become aware that it *was* a positive quantity when they have lost it (*i.e.*, fallen into $-x$). Meantime the genial pleasure from the vital processes, though not represented to the consciousness, is *immanent* in every act, impulse, motion, word, and thought: and a philosopher sees that the idiots are in a state of pleasure, though they cannot see it themselves. Now I say that, where this principle of pleasure is not attacked, madness is often little more than an enthusiasm highly exalted; the animal spirits are exuberant and in excess; and the madman becomes,

if he be otherwise a man of ability and information, all the better as a companion. I have met with several such madmen; and I appeal to my brilliant friend, Professor Wilson of Edinburgh, who is not a man to tolerate dulness in any quarter, and is himself the ideal of a delightful companion, whether he ever met a more amusing person than that madman who took a post-chaise jointly with him and myself, from Penrith to Carlisle, long years ago, when he and I were hastening with the speed of fugitive felons to catch the Edinburgh mail. His fancy and his extravagance, and his furious attacks on Sir Isaac Newton, like Plato's suppers, refreshed us not only for that day, but whenever they recurred to us; and we were both grieved when we heard some time afterwards, from a Cambridge man, that he had met our clever friend in a stage-coach under the care of a brutal keeper.——Such a madness, if any, was the madness of Walking Stewart: his health was perfect; his spirits as light and ebullient as the spirits of a bird in spring-time; and his mind unagitated by painful thoughts, and at peace with himself. Hence, if he was not an amusing companion, it was because the philosophic direction of his thoughts made him something more. Of anecdotes and matters of fact he was not communicative: of all that he had seen in the vast compass of his travels he rarely availed himself in conversation. I do not remember, at this moment, that he ever once alluded to his own travels in his intercourse with me, except for the purpose of weighing down, by a statement grounded on his own great personal experience, an opposite statement of many hasty and misjudging travellers which he thought injurious to human nature. The statement was this—that, in all his countless rencounters with uncivilised tribes, he had never met with any so ferocious and brutal as to attack an unarmed and defenceless man, who was able to make them understand that he threw himself upon their hospitality and forbearance.

On the whole, Walking Stewart was a sublime visionary. He had seen and suffered much amongst men; yet not too much, or so as to dull the genial tone of his sympathy with the sufferings of others. His mind was a mirror of the sentient universe—the whole mighty vision that had fleeted before his eyes in this world: the armies of Hyder Ali and

his son Tippoo, with oriental and barbaric pageantry; the civic grandeur of England; the great deserts of Asia and America; the vast capitals of Europe; London, with its eternal agitations, the ceaseless ebb and flow of its "mighty heart"; Paris, shaken by the fierce torments of revolutionary convulsions; the silence of Lapland; and the solitary forests of Canada; with the swarming life of the torrid zone; together with innumerable recollections of individual joy and sorrow that he had participated by sympathy;—lay like a map beneath him, as if eternally co-present to his view, so that, in the contemplation of the prodigious whole, he had no leisure to separate the parts, or occupy his mind with details. Hence came the monotony which the frivolous and the desultory would have found in his conversation. I, however, who, by accidents of experience, am qualified to speak of him, must pronounce him to have been a man of great genius, and, with reference to his conversation, of great eloquence. That these were not better known and acknowledged was owing to two disadvantages—one grounded in his imperfect education, the other in the peculiar structure of his mind. The first was this: like the late Mr. Shelley, he had a fine vague enthusiasm, and lofty aspirations, in connexion with human nature generally and its hopes; and, like him, he strove to give steadiness, a uniform direction, and an intelligible purpose to these feelings, by fitting to them a scheme of philosophical opinions. But unfortunately the philosophic system of both was so far from supporting their own views, and the cravings of their own enthusiasm, that, as in some points it was baseless, incoherent, or unintelligible, so in others it tended to moral results from which, if they had foreseen them, they would have been themselves the first to shrink, as contradictory to the very purposes in which their system had originated. Hence, in maintaining their own system, they found themselves painfully entangled, at times, with tenets pernicious and degrading to human nature. These were the inevitable consequences of the πρῶτον ψεῦδος[1] in their speculations; but were naturally charged upon them, by those who looked carelessly into their books, as opinions which not merely for the sake of consistency

[1] "πρῶτον ψεῦδος":—the first (or fundamental) falsehood.

they thought themselves bound to endure, but to which they gave the full weight of their sanction and patronage as to so many moving principles in their system. The other disadvantage under which Walking Stewart laboured was this: he was a man of genius, but not a man of talents; at least his genius was out of all proportion to his talents, and wanted an organ, as it were, for manifesting itself, so that his most original thoughts were delivered in a crude state, imperfect, obscure, half-developed, and not productible to a popular audience. He was partially aware of this himself; and, though he claims everywhere the faculty of profound intuition into human nature, yet, with equal candour, he accuses himself of asinine stupidity, dulness, and want of talent. He was a disproportioned intellect, and so far a monster: and he must be added to the long list of original-minded men who have been looked down upon with pity and contempt by commonplace men of talent, whose powers of mind, though a thousand times inferior, were yet more manageable, more self-interpreted, and ran in channels better suited to common uses and common understandings.[1]

[1] In the original in the *London Magazine* for September 1823 there was this concluding paragraph:—"N.B.—About the year 1812 I remember seeing in many of the print-shops a whole-length sketch in water-colours of Walking Stewart in his customary dress and attitude. This, as the only memorial (I presume) in that shape of a man whose memory I love, I should be very glad to possess; and therefore I take the liberty of publicly requesting as a particular favour from any reader of this article who may chance to remember such a sketch in any collection of prints offered for sale, that he would cause it to be sent to the Editor of the *London Magazine*, who will pay for it.—X.Y.Z."—M.

EDITORIAL NOTE

As "Walking Stewart" now lives chiefly, and will probably always live chiefly, in De Quincey's account of him, and as that account is hazy, if not inaccurate, in some points, the following particulars, gleaned from various other quarters, may be acceptable here:—Stewart was *not* a Scotsman by birth, as De Quincey represents him, but only a Scotsman by parentage on both sides. He was born in Bond Street, London, in the year 1749, and was educated at Harrow School, and afterwards at the Charter House. In 1763 he went out to Madras (*not* Bengal) in a writership in the East India Company's service. He had held this writership for but a short time when he wrote home to the Directors of the East India Company that he was "born for nobler pursuits than to be a copier of invoices and bills of lading to a company of grocers, haberdashers, and cheesemongers." Throwing up his post, therefore, he began those extraordinary pedestrian wanderings which earned him his name. They were first over Hindostan,—where they were diversified, however, by a period of residence at the court of the Nawaub of Arcot, as private secretary or what not to that sovereign, and also (whether before or after our authorities do not make clear) by some time of captivity and forced military officership in the service of the Mysore sovereigns, Hyder Ali and Tippoo Saib; but they extended to Persia, and thence, through Arabia and Turkey, back to Europe. Besides Spain, France, Germany, and the British Islands, he took the United States of America, and one knows not what other regions of the earth, within his pedestrian compass at one time or another. Paris was his place of European residence for a while; but from 1792 onwards he seems to have preferred England and London, when not away on any of his touring expeditions. London, at all events, was his habitual place of residence from 1808 onwards. Although De Quincey's account is that he subsisted then on an annuity which he had purchased long before in "his younger days" (*ante*, pp. 96, 97), and that not till about 1814 had he an accession to his means in the shape of £14,000 or so recovered from the East India Company (*ante*, pp. 107, 108), other accounts assign the date of his receipt of this large sum from the East India Company to a much earlier period,—making it in fact a compensation he received not long after

his return to Europe, on the occasion of "the liquidation of the debts of the Nabob of Arcot," for some claims he had against that Indian sovereign, and adding that the annuity or annuities on which he had all along subsisted came from judicious investment of the sum so recovered. Possibly there were two transactions of the kind, an earlier and a later; and, if the research could be made, De Quincey might turn out to be right in this matter,—the rather because it does appear that the eccentric was richer in his later years than he had been before. De Quincey tells us that his last actual interview with Stewart was in or about 1812; but for eight or ten years after that Stewart was a London notability, giving dinner-parties and evening parties, at which he discoursed philosophy with his guests, and entertained them always with Handel's music. Mr. H. G. Bohn, whose interesting list of Stewart's writings we have quoted (*ante*, p. 97), tells us that, about 1820, he was in the habit of attending "Mr. Stewart's philosophical *soirees*," in company with Thomas Taylor, the Platonist. "These meetings," he says, "were usually held on Sunday evenings; and the company, "including ladies, was often numerous." Stewart's domicile was then "near Spring Gardens, St. James's Park"; and there, or in that neighbourhood, he died on the 20th of February 1822, *ætat.* 73. In the *London Magazine* for November of that year appeared the obituary notice of him to which De Quincey refers (*ante*, pp. 107, 108). After some jocular initial sentences about the various kinds of *Walkers*, it proceeds thus, "Alas! the best and most singular of the tribe is "gone! We are almost sure that the name of our loss is already "anticipated in the minds of our readers,—for who that ever weathered "his way over Westminster Bridge has not seen *Walking Stewart* (his "invariable cognomen) sitting in the recess on the brow of the bridge, "spencered up to his throat and down to his hips with a sort of gar-"ment planned, it should seem, to stand *powder*, as became the habit "of a military man; his dingy, dusty inexpressibles (really *inexpress-*"*ibles*)'; his boots, travel-stained, black up to his knees,—and yet not "black neither, but arrant walkers both of them, or their complexions "belied them; his aged, but strongly marked, manly, and air-refined "face, steady as truth; and his large, irregular, dusty hat, that seemed "to be of one mind with the boots? We say, who does not thus "remember *Walking Stewart*, sitting, and leaning on his stick, as if "he had never walked in his life, but had taken his seat on the bridge "at his birth, and had grown old in his sedentary habit? To be sure, "this view of him is rather negatived by as strong a remembrance of "him in the same spencer and accompaniments of hair-powder and "dust, resting on a bench in the Park, with as perfectly an eternal "air; nor will the memory let him keep a quiet, constant seat *here* "for ever,—recalling him, as she is wont, in his shuffling, slow per-"ambulation of the Strand, or Charing Cross, or Cockspur Street. "Where really was he? You saw him on Westminster Bridge, acting "his own monument; you went into the Park,—he was there, fixed as "the gentleman at Charing Cross; you met him, however, at Charing "Cross, creeping on like the hour-hand upon a dial, getting rid of his "rounds and his time at once! Indeed, his ubiquity seemed enor-

"mous,—and yet not so enormous as the profundity of his sitting "habits. He was a profound sitter. Could the Pythagorean system "be embalmed, what a hen would now be tenanted by Walking "Stewart! Truly, he seemed always to be going, like a lot at an "auction, and yet always at a stand, like a hackney-coach! Oh! "what a walk was his to christen a man by,—a slow, lazy, scraping, "creeping, gazing pace,—a shuffle,—a walk in its dotage, a walk at a "standstill! Yet was he a pleasant man to meet. We remember "his face distinctly, and, allowing a little for its northern hardness, it "was certainly as wise, as kindly, and as handsome a face as ever "crowned the shoulders of a soldier, a scholar, and a gentleman. "Well! Walking Stewart is dead!" The notice then goes on to quote some passages from a trumpery pamphlet of sixteen pages, professing to be a life of the dead eccentric by a relative, and concludes with a wish that this relative, whoever he was, would write no more of the like, but would put whatever materials he had for the biography of Walking Stewart into more competent hands. De Quincey, who had read the notice and taken hints from it, must have observed this closing wish in particular.—D. M.

CHAPTER IV

EDWARD IRVING[1]

ANOTHER eminent man of our times, whom I came to know in my later visits to London, was the Rev. Edward Irving[2]; and, in some respects, he is naturally recalled by the remembrance of Walking Stewart; for, like him, he had a fervid nature, a most energetic will, and aspirations after something greater than he could find in life. Like him, also, he owed not very much to education or study. Mr. Irving, unfortunately for his own reputation, sinned so enormously against prudence, and indeed against all sanity of mind during the latter part of his career,—his writings and his actions were so equally indicative of an unsettled intellect,—that, with most people, this sad revolution in his nature has availed to extinguish the recollection of that unequalled splendour of appearance with which he convulsed all London at his first *debût*. He was, unquestionably, by many, many degrees, the greatest orator of our times. Of him, indeed, more than of any man whom I have seen throughout my whole experience, it might be said, with truth and with emphasis, that he was a Boanerges, a son of thunder; and, in a sense, even awful and unhappy for himself, it might be affirmed that he had a demon within himself. Doubt there can now be none that he

[1] From *Tait's Magazine* for October 1840. See footnote, *ante*, p. 99. —M.

[2] Irving, who had been assistant to Dr. Chalmers in Glasgow since 1819, went to London in 1822, when he was thirty years of age, to become minister to the Scottish Presbyterian congregation meeting in the Caledonian Church, Hatton Garden.—M.

was insane, or partially so, from the very first. Not many weeks after his first burst upon the metropolis, I had the pleasure of meeting him at a dinner party. He was in exuberant spirits ; and he strode about the drawing-room, before dinner, with the air of one who looked upon himself as clothed with the functions of Jonah sent to Nineveh, or of Paul upon a celestial mission to the Gentiles. He talked a good deal of phrenology, and in the tone of one who had entirely adopted its great leading doctrines. My head, with a very slight apology for doing so, he examined : his report, being somewhat flattering, I shall not repeat, further than that "conscientiousness" was found in great strength, and "veneration"—which were the chief *moral* indications that he detected. We walked homewards together ; and, as it happened that our roads coincided for three miles or more, we had a good deal of conversation. In one thing he thoroughly agreed with me : viz. in disliking common literary society, by comparison with that of people less pretending, left more to the impulses of their natural unchecked feelings, and entertaining opinions less modelled upon what they read. One ebullition of his own native disposition was, however, not very amiable. Near Charing Cross, a poor houseless female vagrant came up to us and asked charity. Now, it was in no respect surprising to me that Mr. Irving should refuse to give her anything, knowing that so many excellent people systematically set their faces against street alms ; and a man, the most kind-hearted in the world, whose resources are limited, may very reasonably prefer throwing whatever he has at his disposal into the channels of well-organized charitable institutions. Not, therefore, the refusal, but the manner of the refusal, it was which surprised me. Mr. Irving shook off the poor shivering suppliant, whose manner was timid and dejected, with a roughness that would have better become a parish beadle towards a stout masterful beggar counterfeiting the popular character of a shipwrecked mariner. Yet I am far from thinking, or wishing to insinuate, that Edward Irving was deficient in benignity. It was the overmastering demoniac fervour of his nature, the constitutional riot in his blood, more than any harshness of disposition, which prompted his fierce refusal.

It is remarkable, and I mention it as no proof of any sagacity of myself, but, on the contrary, as a proof of broad and palpable indications, open and legible to him who ran, that from what I saw of Mr. Edward Irving at this first interview I drew an augury, and immediately expressed it to more than one friend,—that he was destined to a melancholy close of his career in lunacy. I drew my judgment from the expression and the peculiar restlessness of his eye, combined with the untameable fervour of his manner, and his evident craving after intense states of excitement. I believe that public applause, or at least public sympathy with his own agitated condition of feeling, and public attention, at any rate to himself as a great moral power thundering and lightening through the upper regions of the London atmosphere, really became indispensable to his comfort. The effect of his eloquence, great as that certainly was, had been considerably exaggerated to the general estimate by the obstacles opposed to the popular curiosity in the mere necessities of the narrow chapel within which he preached. Stories of carriage panels beaten in, chapel windows beaten out, as entrances for ladies of rank and distinguished senators —such stories to awaken the public interest, and then (as consequences of that interest which re-acted to sustain and widen it) stories of royal princesses, lord-chancellors, and prime ministers, going, in spite of all difficulties, to hear the new apostle of the North—these things procured for Mr. Irving, during the early novitiate of his London career, if not great audiences (which, numerically speaking, his chapel would not have admitted), yet so memorable a conflict of competition for the small space available to those who had no private right of admission, that inevitably the result was misunderstood, or, at least, misappreciated by the public. The smaller was the disposable accommodation, so much the hotter was the contest: and thus a small chapel and a small congregation told more effectually in his favour, more emphatically proclaimed his sudden popularity, than the largest could have done. Meantime, the presbytery, availing themselves of the sudden enthusiasm called into life by this splendid meteor, collected large subscriptions for a new chapel. This, being built upon a scale proportioned to the

money, offered ample accommodation to the public curiosity.[1] That feeling could not wholly have subsided; but many, like Wilberforce, had found themselves sufficiently gratified by a single experience of Mr. Irving's powers; others, upon principle, were unwilling to leave their old pastors—not to mention that, for the majority, this would have involved a secession from the particular creed to which they adhered; and, when deductions were made from Mr. Irving's audiences, upon these and other accounts, those who still went as extra auditors were no longer numerous enough, now that they were diffused through a large chapel, to create the former tumultuous contests for admission.

The enthusiasm of the public had now subsided and settled into a condition more uniform, and no longer capable of holding up a mirror which reflected Mr. Irving's own intense state of exaltation. It was the state of collapse which succeeded in his mind, the want of correspondence which he found between the public zeal to be taught or moved and his own to teach or move: this it was, I can hardly doubt, which drove him into those crazy speculations which eventually cost him the general respect, and led to an open breach between himself and the trustees for the management of the property embarked upon the chapel. Unable to win the popular astonishment by the legitimate display of his extraordinary powers, he attempted to secure the same end by extravagance. The whole extent of this extravagance, it is true, he did not perceive; for his mind was unhinged. But still the insanity, which had preyed upon him from the very first, lay more in his moral nature, and in a disease of his will, than in the functions of his intellect. Disappointment, vexation of heart, wounded pride, and latterly, perhaps, some tinge of remorse for the abuse which he had made of his magnificent endowments, all combined with the constitutional fever in his blood to sap his health and spirits. That he was very unhappy latterly I have no doubt; nor was I, for my part, ever

[1] The new church built for Irving to supersede the too straitened church in Hatton Garden was the large edifice now known as the Scotch Church, Regent Square. The foundation-stone was laid in the summer of 1824, and the church was completed in 1829.—M.

called upon to feel so powerfully the conviction that here was a ruined man of genius, and a power in the first rank of great moral agencies, an orator the most Demosthenic of our age, descending rapidly to night and utter extinction, as during the whole latter years of Edward Irving's troubled existence.[1]

I am not singular in my estimate of him as an orator. Mr. Canning, a most accomplished orator himself, and, as a great *artist*, the first orator of our times, but perhaps, for that very reason, less likely to do full justice in a case of power that was altogether natural, and no way indebted to art, even he (when visiting Mr. Bolton of Storrs, on Windermere) said something very nearly approaching to what I have here said. I did not hear it myself; but I afterwards heard it from many who did. He was the only man of our times who realized one's idea of Paul preaching at Athens, or defending himself before King Agrippa. Terrific meteor! unhappy son of fervid genius, which mastered thyself even more than the rapt audiences which at one time hung upon thy lips! were the cup of life once again presented to thy lips, wouldst thou drink again, or wouldst thou not rather turn away from it with shuddering abomination? Sleep, Boanerges! and let the memory of man settle only upon thy colossal powers, without a thought of those intellectual aberrations which were more powerful for thy own ruin than for the misleading of others!

[1] Irving's theological extravagances, progressive since 1825, having culminated in 1830, he was in that year condemned for heresy by his brethren of the Scottish Presbytery in London. In 1832 he was ejected from his new church in Regent Square; in 1833 he was deposed altogether from the ministry of the Church of Scotland; and on the 8th of December 1834 he died in Glasgow, a splendid wreck, in the forty-third year of his age.—M.

CHAPTER V

TALFOURD: THE LONDON MAGAZINE: MR. TAYLOR AND HIS BOOK ON JUNIUS: CLARE: ALLAN CUNNINGHAM [1]

WHILST I am upon the ground of London, that "Nation of London" (as I have elsewhere called it), which I have so often visited, and yet for periods so brief that my entire London life, if transposed from its dislocated periods into one continuous aggregate, would not make above one and a half year in the whole result, it may be as well to notice some other circumstances, partly of a literary, partly of a general interest, and which might be worthy of notice in any man's life, but were so especially in the life of one who held some peculiar principles — compromises in a measure between the extreme principles commonly avowed — which I shall explain in connexion with the occasion.

First, then, confining myself to my London literary experience: it was not, certainly, extensive, nor was I in spirits or in circumstances to wish it such. I lived in the most austere retirement; and the few persons whom I saw occasionally, or whose hospitalities I received, were *gens de plume*, and professedly of my own order as practising literati, but of the highest pretensions. Lamb I have already mentioned. Sergeant Talfourd I became acquainted with in the beautiful hall of the Middle Temple; whence (after dining together in the agreeable style inherited from elder days, and so pleasantly recalling the noble refectories of Oxford

[1] From *Tait's Magazine* for December 1840.

amidst the fervent tumults of London) we sometimes adjourned to our coffee at the chambers of the future author of *Ion*, and enjoyed the luxury of conversation with the *elite* of the young Templars upon the most stirring themes of life or literature. Him, indeed, I had known when a Temple student. But, in 1821, when I went up to London avowedly for the purpose of exercising my pen, as the one sole source then open to me for extricating myself from a special embarrassment (failing which case of dire necessity, I believe that I should never have written a line for the press), Mr. Talfourd having become a practising barrister, I felt that I had no right to trespass upon his time without some stronger warrant than any I could plead in my own person. I had, therefore, requested a letter of introduction to him from Wordsworth. That was a spell which, with this young lawyer, I knew to be all-potent; and, accordingly, I now received from him a great deal of kindness, which came specially commended to a man in dejected spirits by the radiant courtesy and the cheerfulness of his manners: for, of all the men whom I have known, after long intercourse with the business of the world, the Sergeant is the one who most preserves, to all outward appearance, the freshness and integrity of his youthful spirits.[1]

From him, also, I obtained an introduction to Messrs. Taylor & Hessey, who had very recently, upon the melancholy death of Mr. Scott, in consequence of his duel with Mr. Christie, purchased *The London Magazine*, and were themselves joint editors of that journal.[2] The terms they held

[1] Thomas Noon Talfourd, born 1795, was called to the bar 1821, obtained his silk gown 1833, was promoted to the bench 1849, and died 1854. His tragedy of *Ion* was published in 1835, and was followed by three other dramas and some prose works.—M.

[2] The *London Magazine* had been started in January 1820, with Messrs. Baldwin, Cradock, & Joy for its proprietors and publishers, and Mr. John Scott for its editor. He was an Aberdonian by birth, who had settled in London, and was known already by some popular publications, such as *A Visit to Paris in* 1814, *Paris Revisited in* 1815 *by way of Brussels, Picturesque Views of Paris*, &c. He conducted the magazine till February 1821; on the 16th of which month there was a duel between him and Mr. Christie, a friend of Scott's son-in-law Lockhart, arising out of some violent attacks in the magazine on

out to contributors were ultra-munificent—more so than had yet been heard of in any quarter whatsoever ; and, upon that understanding—seeing that money was just then of necessity, the one sole object to which I looked in the cultivation of literature—naturally enough it happened that to *them* I offered my earliest paper : viz. " The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater."

Of the two publishers, who were both hospitable and friendly men, with cultivated minds, one, viz. Mr. Taylor, was himself an author, and, upon one subject, a most successful one.[1] He had written, indeed, at that time, and since then, I understand, has written again, upon different parts of political economy. But to all who are acquainted with the great reformation of this science effected by David Ricardo, it will appear as a matter of course, upon looking into Mr. Taylor's works, that he should be found to have merely trifled. In reality, the stern application of one single doctrine—that, namely, which expounds the laws of value — would be sufficient, as I believe, of itself, to demonstrate the refutation of Mr. Taylor's, as of so many other erroneous views, in this severe but much-bewildering science. In Mr. Taylor's case, from what I saw of his opinions in 1821, I have reason to think that Locke had been the chief instrument in leading him astray.

its Edinburgh rival, *Blackwood*, and on Lockhart as the supposed chief representative of *Blackwood*. The duel had been projected at first as between Scott and Lockhart himself ; but Mr. Christie, Lockhart's intended second, had made himself principal. The result is thus registered in the obituary columns of the *London Magazine* itself : " Died, 27th February, at Chalk Farm, where he had remained since the fatal duel which took place between him and Mr. Christie on the evening of the 16th February, John Scott, Esq., late editor of this magazine, aged 37." The same number of the magazine (April 1821) contains an appeal, by Sir James Mackintosh and others, for subscriptions in behalf of Scott's widow and two children, who had been left destitute. Shortly afterwards, as De Quincey records, the magazine passed into the hands of Messrs. Taylor & Hessey.

[1] Mr. John Taylor, publisher, is now chiefly remembered by his book on *Junius*, the first edition of which appeared in 1813 with the title *A Discovery of the Author of the Letters of Junius*, and the second in 1818 with the title *The Identity of Junius with a distinguished living character* [Sir Philip Francis] *established*. It is still a leading book in the great Junius controversy.—M.

Mr. Taylor professed himself a religious dissenter ; and in all the political bearings of dissent he travelled so far that, if in any one instance he manifested an illiberal spirit, it was in the temper which he held habitually towards the Church of England. Then first, indeed, it was—and amongst the company which I sometimes saw at Mr. Taylor's—that I became aware of the deadly hatred—savage, determined hatred, made up for mischief—which governed a large part of the well-educated dissenters in their feelings towards the Church of England. Being myself, not by birth and breeding only, but upon the deliberate adoption of my judgment, an affectionate son of that Church, in respect to her doctrines, her rites, her discipline, and her internal government, I was both shocked and grieved to meet with what seemed to me so much levity of rash judgment amongst the thoughtful and well-principled, so harsh an illiberality amongst the liberal, so little consideration amongst the considerate. One thing was clear to me : that, in general, this angry spirit of hostility was grounded upon a false, because a superannuated, set of facts. Never, in any great public corporation, had there been, as I well knew, so large a reformation as in the Church of England during the last forty years. The collateral Church of Methodists, hardly a Dissenting Church, raised up by John Wesley, had, after one generation or so, begun to react upon the Metropolitan Church, out of whose bosom it had been projected. The two Universities of England had constantly fed from within this growing galvanism applied from without : Mr. Simeon, Professor Farish, Dean Milner, in Cambridge ; Mr. Faber, the little society of Edmund Hall, &c., in Oxford ; Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Babington, Mr. Thornton, in the Senate ; Mrs. Hannah More in literature ; severally offered a nucleus around which, I have understood, the open profession of a deeper, more fervid, and apostolical spirit in religious opinions and religious practices had been emboldened to gather ; and the result has been that, whilst the English Church, from Queen Anne's day to the French Revolution, was at the lowest point of its depression, and absolutely cankered to the heart by the spirit of worldliness, that same Church in our days, when standing on the brink, apparently, of great trials, and summoned to put forth

peculiar vigilance of watch and ward, if not even to face great and trying storms, has, by great examples, by extensive religious associations, and by a powerful press, concurring with the unusual thoughtfulness generated by the French Revolution and the vast changes in its train, most seasonably been brought gradually into a frame and composition which all who have looked with interest upon the case deem much nearer than at any other stage of its history to the condition of a primitive and truly pastoral Church.

With these views I was as much astonished as I was grieved to find the Established Church an object, at this particular crisis, of enmity so profound. Thus, however, it was. Mr. Taylor, I apprehend, shared in all the dominant feelings of the dissenters, such as I heard them frequently expressed in his society; and naturally, therefore, he entertained, amongst other literary opinions, a peculiar and perhaps blind veneration for Locke. Locke, in fact, is made an idol amongst the "Rational" Dissenters: those whose religion begins and terminates in the understanding. This idolatry is paid to him in a double character, as the most eminent patron of religious liberty, and as the propounder of views in Christianity pretty much akin to their own want of depth, and in "anti-mysticism," as a friend might call it, but, speaking sincerely, in hostility to all that is unfathomable by the mere discursive understanding. I am not here going to entertain so large a theme as the philosophy of Locke. In another place I shall, perhaps, astonish the reader by one or two of the yet undetected blunders he has committed in his philosophy. But, confining myself to his political economy, I may take occasion to notice one error, with regard to that part of his pretensions, which has misled many. By mere accident, Locke was right, in his dispute with Lowndes of the Treasury, upon a question which arose in connexion with the great recoinage of King William's days.[1] At the request of Lord Somers, Locke undertook the discussion; and, as he happened to be right in opposition to a man whose official duty it was to have understood the subject thoroughly upon which he speculated so wildly, this advantage, settling, in *his*

[1] William Lowndes published in 1695 an *Essay for the Amendment of the Silver Coin*, to which Locke replied in the same year.—M.

case, upon a novice matched against a doctor, procured for Locke an enthusiasm of admiration which the case did not really warrant ; and it was afterwards imagined, by those who looked back casually into Locke's treatises, that he was a sound economist. But the fact is, political economy had, in those days, no sort of existence : no one doctrine, not so much as that which unfolds the benefits from the division of labour, was then known : the notion, again, that a nation did or could benefit by commerce, otherwise than by the accident of selling more than she bought, and, as a consequence, by accumulating the balance in the form of the precious metals —this notion was inconceivable to the human understanding at the era of Locke : no progress had been made in dissipating that delusion ; and Locke was as much enslaved by it as any other man. Possibly—and there is some room to think it—he was a little in advance of the Ciceronian idea that the very possibility of a gain in any transaction of sale between two parties was logically conceivable only upon the assumption of a deception on one side : that, unless they would "lie pretty considerably" (*nisi admodum mentiantur*), merchants must resign all hope of profit. The grounds of value, again, were as little known to Locke as the consequences of those grounds ; and, in short, he had not made one step ahead of his age in any one branch of political economy. But, in his dispute with Lowndes, the victory was gained, not over scientific blunders by scientific lights ; no, but over mere logical blunders, the very grossest, by common sense the most palpable. It was no victory of a special science, but one of general logic. There were no positive truths elicited, but simply a refutation, scarcely in that age needed, of some self-contradictory errors. Lowndes had so far confused himself as to suppose that the same ounce of silver might, at the same time and place, be worth more or less than itself, when thrown into the shape of coin. The most obvious truths Locke himself appears to have overlooked, notwithstanding the English silver currency at that moment illustrated some of them. Locke, therefore, exposed a set of errors which could not have arisen in anything short of Irish confusion of ideas ; and the truths of an affirmative order belonging to the subject, which, even under the feeble light of those times,

might have been detected, escaped him altogether. So much I have thought it right to say on Mr. Taylor's Political Economy, and the sort of sanction which he seeks to draw from Locke, who has led many others astray, by the authority of his name, upon a subject over which he has no sort of jurisdiction ; neither did that age furnish any one who had.

But, if Mr. Taylor failed (as, honestly, I believe he did) in this field, in another he effected a discovery so brilliant, so powerfully sustained by evidences overwhelming and irresistible, after (be it remembered) efforts the most elaborate and numerous to solve the problem, that he certainly deserves a high place, and perhaps next to Bentley, in this species of exploratory literature. With little or no original hints to direct him in his path, he undertook the great literary enigma of Junius—Who and what was he ?—and brought that question to a decision that never can be unsettled or disturbed by any person except one who is unacquainted with the arguments.[1] I have understood, but perhaps not upon sufficient authority, that the notice of this work in *The Edinburgh Review* was drawn up by Lord Brougham. If so, I must confess my surprise : there is not much of a lawyer's accuracy in the abstract of the evidence, nor is the result stated with the boldness which the premises warrant. Chief Justice Dallas, of the Common Pleas, was wont to say that a man arraigned as Junius upon the evidence here accumulated against Sir Philip Francis must have been convicted in any court of Europe. But I would go much farther : I would say that there are single proofs which (taken separately and apart from all the rest) are sufficient to sustain the whole *onus* of the charge. I would also argue thus :—If a man in one character (his avowed character, suppose, of Francis) uses a word in some peculiar sense, or in some very irregular manner, then it will become high argument against this man, as liable to the suspicion of having been the masque in the assumed character of Junius, that this masque shall also be proved to have used the same word in the same anomalous way. Suppose now that any ordinary presumption, or any coincidence of ordinary force shall be considered $= x$; then I may be entitled to value this remarkable coincidence in

[1] See footnote, *ante*, p. 128.—M.

anomalous practice as x^2, or, however, as equal to some higher power of the same order. But, now, suppose further that Francis has also, in his mode of correcting "proof-sheets" and "revises" from the press, fallen into a constant misconception of the function assigned by compositors to a particular mark; and suppose that this misconception is by no means a natural or obvious misconception, but one which rests upon some accident of individual blundering; then I should say that, if upon examination pursued through a multitude of specimens, it comes out flagrantly that Junius has also fallen into the same very peculiar and *unobvious* error, in this case we have a presumption for the identity of the two characters, Francis and Junius, which (taken separately) is entitled to be valued as a high function of x. But I say further that a *second* presumption of the same order may lawfully demand to be reckoned as multiplying its own value into the second value. Meantime the tendency of all the external arguments drawn from circumstantial or personal considerations, from local facts, or the records of party, flows in the very same channel; with all the internal presumptions derived from the style, from the anomalous use of words, from the anomalous construction of the syntax, from the peculiar choice of images, from the arbitrary use of the technical short-hand for correcting typographical errors, from capricious punctuation, and even from penmanship (which, of itself, taken separately, has sometimes determined the weightiest legal interests). Proofs, in fact, rush upon us more plentiful than blackberries: and the case ultimately begins to be fatiguing, from the very plethora and riotous excess of evidence. It would stimulate attention more, and pique the interest of curiosity more pungently, if there were some conflicting evidence, some shadow of presumptions against Francis. But there are none, absolutely none.

Under these circumstances, the reader will begin to say, How came it then that the controversy about Junius, which has raged for upwards of half a century, and has already produced books and pamphlets past all numbering (insomuch that I have heard of several persons projecting a *Bibliotheca Juniana, or Museum Junianum*); how came it, the reader will ask, that this controversy did not drop at once and for ever, as a question summarily but irreversibly decided, as a balloon

from which all the inflating air had suddenly escaped? How is it that we still see the old Junian *pompholyx*, that ancient and venerable bubble, still floating in the upper air? This may be explained out of two facts: one being that very few people have made themselves familiar with the arguments. I have never yet happened to meet anybody who had mastered the investigation so far as to be aware that there was anything more made out against Sir Philip Francis than some vague presumptions, founded on similarity of handwritings, and perhaps some coincidence between the main periods of Junius, as to his rise and setting, with certain known critical incidents in the career of Francis. The coherence and interdependency in the total chainwork of evidence, and the independent strength of each particular link, is little known to the public. That is one reason for the non-decisiveness of this most decisive book. A second is the absurd tradition, which has taken root in the public mind, that some all-superseding revelation is to be made upon this subject at the death of some Pitt or Grenville unknown. For many a year it was asserted, every six months, in the newspapers, that Lord Grenville was the man at whose death a final discovery was to be made, such as nobody could gainsay. And to this day, though the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Grenville, and every other person of that generation in the Pitt and Grenville families, has died and "made no sign," the same ridiculous legend is occasionally repeated in the newspapers. But the best possible answer to this idle fable is, simply, to ask a man for one moment's reflection upon its meaning; for what is it that any man *could* establish by his death, or by any act consequent upon his death, such as a will or codicil to a will? *Living*, perhaps Lord Grenville might have argued the case with Mr. Taylor upon the basis of his own recollections; but, being dead, what more could he possibly do than leave behind him a writing, certificate, or memorial, that somebody had told him he was Junius, or that he had personal reasons for suspecting that such or such a person might be Junius? So that the utmost result would have been to make out some rival case. A third reason is the same which influenced Mr. Woodfall. This gentleman having long cherished the idea,—an idea encouraged by various artifices on the part of Junius,—

that the masqued writer was a very great man, some leading statesman, it mortified him, and threw a colouring of the burlesque upon the aristocratic airs of Junius, to suppose him, after all, no more than a clerk in the War-Office. These are the common reasons for the non-satisfaction (dissatisfaction it cannot be called) of most men with the case as it stands in popular repute. But there is a *fourth* reason, stronger than all the rest, which weighs much with many even of those who have some personal acquaintance with the evidence, and (so far as that acquaintance goes) are not dissatisfied with its force. It is this,—and I have once stated it at length in a private letter to Mr. Taylor; and singular enough it will be thought that this objection to the evidence turns out, when probed, its very strongest confirmation. Thus it stands:—

People allege that Sir Philip Francis was a vain man, fond of notoriety, and, beyond all things, fond of literary notoriety; and yet he never unmasked himself as Junius, never hinted at any interest which he had in these thrice celebrated letters; and, at length, when the claim is made on his behalf by a stranger, he not only does not come forward to countersign this claim as authentic, but absolutely, with some sternness, appears to disavow it. How is this? Here lies a glittering trophy; a derelict, exposed in the public highway. People have been known to violate their consciences, under the most awful circumstances, in order to establish a false pretension to it; people have actually died with a falsehood on their lips, for the poor chance of gaining what, for *them*, could be no more than a posthumous reputation, and this to be enjoyed, even in its visionary foretaste, only for a few fleeting moments of life, with a certainty of present guilt, and at the hazard of future exposure. All this has been done by those who are conscious of having only a false claim. And here is the man who, by the supposition, has the true claim; a man, too, eminently vain-glorious; and yet *he* will not put forth his hand to appropriate the prize; nay, positively rejects it. Such is the objection. Now, hear the answer:—First, he did *not* reject it. The place in which he is supposed to have done so is a short letter addressed to Sir Richard Phillips, by way of answer to a very impertinent demand, on that

worthy publisher's part, for a categorical answer to the question,—*Was he, or was he not, Junius?* Now, Sir Philip *seems* to say—"No": and he certainly framed his letter with a view to be so understood. But, on a nicer inspection of this answer, we may perceive that it is most jesuitically adapted to convey an impression at variance with the strict construction which lurks in the literal wording. Even that artifice, however, lets us behind the scenes, by showing that Sir Philip had a masqued design before him—a design to evade an acknowledgment which, in conscience, he could not boldly and blankly refute, and which, by vanity, he longed to establish. Yet, had this been otherwise, had he even pointedly and unambiguously said *No*, we could not, in the circumstances of the case, have built much upon *that*. For we know, and Sir Philip knew, what had been Dr. Johnson's casuistry, applied to this very case of Junius. Burke having been named, improbably enough, as Junius, the Doctor said "No": he acquitted Burke altogether; not because he had disowned the authorship; for *that* he had a right to do, even if really Junius; since, if veracity could be supposed any duty in such a case, then it was idle, from the first, to assume a masque; a masque that would be at the mercy of the first person who chose to go beyond others in impertinence. Surely impertinence ought to create no special right over another man's secret. And, therefore, along with the disguise, any sensible man must be presumed to take up the privilege of saying "*No*," as one essential accessory and adjunct to that disguise. But, argued Johnson, Burke *volunteered* the disavowal; made it spontaneously, when nobody questioned him. Being, therefore, not called on for this as a measure of defence, on that ground I hold him to have spoken the truth in disavowing Junius. This defence of a prudential untruth, in a case supposed, was well known to Francis. Armed with this authoritative sanction, Sir Philip —a mere lax man of the world—would readily have resorted to a falsehood, even in a case no stronger than Dr. Johnson's casuistry supposed. But, in fact, as we shall see, *his* was a great deal stronger; so that, *à fortiori*, he had the doctor's permission to make the boldest denial; and such a denial we should, in such a case, be entitled to hold as none

at all. And yet, after all, he only allows himself an *apparent* denial; one which depends, for its effect, upon the haste and inaccuracy of the reader.

What, then, was the case of Sir Philip which I affirm to be so much stronger than that which had been contemplated by Dr. Johnson as a case justifying a denial of the truth? It was this: *Sir Philip Francis was* the creature *of Junius.* Whatever Sir Philip had—his wealth, his honours, his consideration, were owing to the letters of Junius; to the power which he had obtained under that signature; and to the mode in which, having obtained power like a thief, he had sold it like a traitor. Armed with that potent spell, he had made himself, first, formidable to the King and to his Cabinet; secondly, had brought himself, when thus armed, into the market for sale. But how? By what means? I answer: By the blackest treachery; by a double treachery; by treachery, as respected the way in which he rose into Junius; and by an equal treachery to his own principles, *as* Junius, in his mode of laying down that character. How is it, do we suppose, that Junius had won the national ear? Not by the means (generally presumed) of fine composition. No: but by the reputation he enjoyed of having won the ear of the King's government. And he had so; it was no false reputation. But again I say, in this case also, How? If the public could be won by such tinkling music, is any man childish enough to suppose that the care-laden Ministers of a great nation, overwhelmed by business, would find leisure to read *Cato* or *Publicola*, purely for the value of their style or their tropes? No: the true cause was that Ministers found, in these letters, proofs of some enemy, some spy, being amongst them. Did *they* join the popular cry—"Here is a great rhetorician"? Never believe it; but, "Here is a great thief." Not the eloquence, but the larceny, moved *their* anxieties. State secrets were betrayed. Francis was the spy. He picked Lord Barrington's locks; he practised daily as an eavesdropper upon Lord Barrington's private communications with Ministers: he abused, for his own purposes, the information, select and secret, which often came before him officially, in his character of clerk at the War-Office. In short, he was an unfaithful servant, who, first of all, built

himself up into terror and power as Junius, on a thorough-going plan of disloyalty to his patron, and afterwards built himself up into the Right Honourable Sir Philip Francis, Knight of the Bath, Privy Councillor, one of the Supreme Council in Bengal, with £12,000 per annum,—all this upon a disloyalty equally deliberate to all the principles and the patriotism which he had professed as Junius. The first perfidy would only have put a gay feather into his cap; this he improved into a second, which brought him place, honour, "troops of friends," this world's wealth, in short, and every mode of prosperity but one; which one was peace of mind and an unclouded conscience. Such was the brief abstract of Sir Philip's history. Now, though most men would *not*, yet there were still surviving very many who *would*, upon any direct avowal that he was Junius, at once put "this" and "that" together, and, in one moment of time, come to unlock what had always been something of a mystery to Mr. Francis's friends at home—viz. how it was that he, the obscure clerk of the War-Office, notoriously upon bad terms with Lord Barrington, his principal, had, nevertheless, shot up all at once into a powerful Oriental satrap. The steps, the missing gradation, would suddenly be recovered, and connected into a whole. "Thou hast it, Cawdor!" The metamorphosis of Francis into the Bengal potentate was unintelligible: but the intermediation of Junius would harmonize all difficulties. Thus grew Francis the clerk into Junius (viz. by treason). Thus grew Junius the demagogue into Francis the Rajah, viz. by selling his treason. "*You are Junius?*" it would be said: "*Why, then, you are a very brilliant fellow.*" That would be the first reflection; but then would come a second on the heels of *that*:—"*And a most unprincipled knave, who rose into great consideration by filching his master's secrets.*"

Here, then, we read the true secret of his chicanery in replying to Sir R. Phillips. Had he been thoroughly determined to disavow Junius, could he have brought his heart to do so, we may be sure that he would not have needed (Junius would have known how to find clear language) to speak so obscurely as he *has* done in this short reply. Neither would he have contented himself with any simple

denial; he would have recited some facts in his life circumstantiating his denial. But this was not in his power to do; nor did he sincerely wish it. Naturally he must have clung, with a perfect rapture of vanity, to his own too famous production. Respect for his own character forbade him to avow it. Parental vanity forbade him so to disavow it as that he could never have reclaimed it. Sir Philip Francis had been a great criminal; but his crime produced its own intolerable punishment. The tantalization of his heart when denied the privilege, open to every other human being, of claiming the products of his own brain and of his own excessive[1] labour, must have been a perpetual martyrdom. And, in this statement of the case, we read a natural solution of two else inexplicable facts: first, why Sir P. Francis (supposing him Junius) did not come forward to claim his work. And, secondly, why Junius, the mysterious Junius, old "*Nominis umbra*" (supposing him Francis), did not come forward to proclaim his own name. To presume Francis and Junius one and the same person at once explains both mysteries. Upon the Taylorian hypothesis, all is made clear as daylight why Junius did not avow his name —why Francis did not claim his literary honours. Upon such an account only is it possible to explain the case. All other accounts leave it a perpetual mystery, unfathomable upon any principles of human nature, why Junius did not, at least, make his claim by means of some last will and testament. We cannot imagine that a writer, evidently under the most intense worldly influences of vain-glory and ambition, should voluntarily have made a sacrifice (and a sacrifice with no apparent motive) of what, in the pardonable exaggeration of an author's vanity, must, to him, have appeared one of the greatest works in political as also in rhetorical literature. Such an act of austere self-mortification is inconceivable, except amongst the most rapturous devotees of the Romish Church: shame only or fear[2] can

[1] "*His own excessive labour*":—"Is there no labour in these letters?" asks Junius, in a tone of triumphant appeal. And, on other occasions, he insists upon the vast toil which the composition cost him.

[2] "*Fear*":—"Sir William would meet me in the field: others would assassinate."—*Junius to Sir Wm. Draper.*

avail to solve the enigma. But fear, if at all admitted as applicable to the case, could not extend beyond his own term of life : that motive cannot explain the silence of his last will and testament. There, at least, he would have spoken out to posterity, and his own surviving compatriots. "If I live," says he, in his Dedication to the People of England, "you shall often hear of me." And, doubtless, even in dying, if he forgot *them*, he would remember himself and his own really memorable pretensions. He would not forget, at least, to order some inscription on his own grave, pointing backwards to the gay trophies of him who had extorted fear from kings, and admiration from angry senates.[1] This he would have done : this he has not done ; and a principle of shame only, operating in the way I have mentioned, is a case capable of explaining it. That case is precisely the case of Sir Philip Francis.

It remains only to say that, by neglecting to press these facts and their natural construction against Sir Philip, Mr. Taylor allowed the only powerful argument against his hypothesis to stand unanswered. A motive of kindness towards the unhappy Sir Philip himself, and consideration for the pious feelings of his son and daughter, may have influenced Mr. Taylor in this forbearance. All are now dead ; and these restraints can operate no longer. But even in the lifetime of the parties surely enough might have been hinted to maintain the impregnability of the hypothesis, without seriously wounding the sensibilities of Sir Philip. These sensibilities merited respect ; inasmuch, as though pointing to a past chapter of deep criminality, it is not impossible that they had long connected themselves with virtuous feelings of remorse, and a suffering sense of honour ; most assuredly they brought along with them the bitterest chastisement, by that unexampled self-sacrifice which they

[1] "*He would not have forgotten, at least, to order some inscription on his own grave*," &c. Accordingly, there is in *The Anti-Jacobin Review* a story told of a stranger dying at a village inn, somewhere, I think, in Buckinghamshire, and directing that no memorial should be placed upon his grave, beyond the initial letters of his name, and the motto of Junius, "*Stat nominis umbra*." So much weight was attached to the story that Charles Fox is said to have visited his grave. Probably the whole is a fiction.

entailed. But all this might have been met and faced by Mr. Taylor: the reader might have been summoned in general terms, before allowing an unnecessary weight to the fact of Sir Philip's *apparent* renunciation of the claim made on his behalf, to consider two capital points: first, whether he really *had* renounced it, and in such terms as admitted of no equivocal construction; secondly, whether (even supposing him to have done this in the amplest sense, and with no sort of reserve) there might not appear some circumstances in the past recital of Sir Philip's connexion with the War-Office and Lord Barrington which would forcibly restrain him in old age, when clothed with the high state characters of senator and privy counsellor, invested therefore with grave obligations of duty,—I say, restrain him from seeming, by thus assuming the imputed authorship, to assume, along with it, the responsibility attaching to certain breaches of confidence which the temptations of ambition, and the ardour of partisanship, might palliate in a young man, but which it would not become an old one to adopt and own, under any palliations whatever, or upon any temptations of literary gain. Such an appeal as this could not greatly have distressed Sir Philip Francis, or not more, however, than he had already been distressed by the inevitable disclosures of the investigation itself, as connected with the capital thesis of Mr. Taylor that Francis and Junius were the self-same person.

Here, therefore, was a great oversight of Mr. Taylor; and over the results of this oversight his discoveries, the unconquerable points of his exposure, have not yet established their victory. I may mention, however, that Sir Philip so far dallied with the gratification offered to his vanity in this public association of his name with Junius as to call upon Mr. Taylor. His visit seemed partly a sort of tentative measure, adopted in a spirit of double uncertainty—uncertainty about the exact quantity of proof that Mr. Taylor might have accumulated; and uncertainty, again, about the exact temper of mind in which it became him to receive the new discoveries. He affected to be surprised that anybody should ever have thought of him in connexion with Junius. Now, possibly, this was a mere careless expression, uttered

simply by way of an introduction to the subsequent conversation. Else, and if it were said deliberately, it showed great weakness; for, assuredly, Sir Philip was too much a man of shrewd sagacity to fail in perceiving that, were it even possible for presumptions so many and so strong to be, after all, compatible with final falsehood, still a case had been made out far too strong for any man unaffectedly to pretend surprise at its winning some *primâ facie* credit. Mr. Taylor naturally declined re-arguing the case; he resigned it to its own merits, which must soon dispose of it in public estimation, but at the same time protested against having viewed his discovery in any other light than that of honour to Sir Philip; indeed, in a literary sense, who would *not* be honoured (he asked) by the imputation of being Junius? So closed the conversation substantially on the respondent's part. But the appellant, Sir Philip, gave a singular turn to *his* part, which thus far had been rather to him a tone of expostulation, by saying in conclusion—

"Well, at least, I think, you can do no less than send me a copy of your book."

This, of course, was done; and, with some slight interchange of civilities attending the transmission of the book, I believe the intercourse terminated.

Sir Philip suffered under a most cruel disease, which soon put an end to his troubled life; and my own belief is that there ended as agitated an existence as can have been supported by frail humanity.[1] He was naturally a man of bad and harsh disposition; insolent, arrogant, and ill-tempered. Constitutionally, he was irritable; bodily sufferings had exasperated the infirmities of his temper; and the mixed agony of body and mind in which he passed his latter years must have been fearful even to contemplate. The Letters of Junius certainly show very little variety or extent of thought; no comprehensive grasp; no principles of any kind, false or sound; no powers, in fact, beyond the powers of sarcasm; but they have that sort of modulated rhythm, and that air of classical chastity (perhaps arising more from the penury of ornament, and the absence of any impassioned eloquence,

[1] Sir Philip Francis, born 1740, died 22d December 1818, shortly after the publication of the second edition of Mr. Taylor's book.—M.

than from any positive causes), which, co-operating with the shortness of the periods, and the unparalleled felicity of their sarcasms, would, at any rate, have conciliated the public notice. They have exactly that sort of talent which the owner is sure to overrate. But the intensity, the sudden growth, and the durability[1] of their fame, were due (as I must ever contend), not to any qualities of style or composition—though, doubtless, these it is which co-operated with the thick cloak of mystery to sustain a reputation once gained—but to the knowledge dispersed through London society that the Government had been appalled by Junius, as one who, in some way or other, had possessed himself of their secrets.

The London Magazine, of whose two publishers (editors also) I have thus introduced to the reader that one who had also distinguished himself as an author, was at that time brilliantly supported. And strange it is, and also has been to others as well as myself, that such a work should not have prospered; but prosper it did not. Meantime, the following writers were, in 1821-23, amongst my own *collaborateurs*:—Charles Lamb; Hazlitt; Allan Cunningham; Hood; Hamilton Reynolds; Cary the unrivalled translator of Dante; Crow, the Public Orator of Oxford. And so well were all departments provided for that even the monthly abstract of politics, brief as it necessarily was, had been confided to the care of Phillips, the celebrated Irish barrister. Certainly a literary *Pleiad* might have been gathered out of the stars connected with this journal; and the others were, I believe, occasional contributors, who could not be absolutely counted upon, and therefore I do not mention them. One, however, who joined *The London* in 1823, I think, calls for a separate mention: viz. Clare, the peasant poet of Northamptonshire.[2]

[1] "*The durability*," &c.—It is, however, remarkable that, since the great expansion of the public mind by political discussions consequent upon the Reform Bill, Junius is no longer found a saleable book: so, at least, I have heard from various persons.

[2] John Clare, born 1793 at Helpstone, near Peterborough, of poor or actually pauper parents, had struggled on as an agricultural labourer till 1820, when Messrs. Taylor & Hessey became interested in him and published a volume of his pieces entitled *Poems descriptive of Rural*

Our Scottish brethren are rather too apt, in the excess of that nationality which, dying away in some classes, is still burning fervently in others, and which, though giving a just right of complaint to those who suffer by it, and though direfully disfiguring the liberality of the national manners, yet stimulates the national rivalship usefully, — our Scottish brethren, I say, are rather too apt to talk as if in Scotland only there were any precedents to be found of intellectual merit struggling upwards in the class of rustic poverty: whereas there has in England been a larger succession of such persons than in Scotland. Inquire, for instance, as to the proportion of those who have risen to distinction by mere weight of unassisted merit, in this present generation, at the English bar; and then inquire as to the corresponding proportion at the Scotch bar. Oftentimes it happens that in the poetry of this class little more is found than the gift of a tolerably good ear for managing the common metres of the language. But in Clare it was otherwise. His poems were not the mere reflexes of his reading. He had studied for himself in the fields, and in the woods, and by the side of brooks. I very much doubt if there could be found in his poems a single commonplace image, or a description made up of hackneyed elements. In that respect, his poems are original, and have even a separate value, as a sort of calendar (in extent, of course, a very limited one) of many rural appearances, of incidents in the fields not elsewhere noticed, and of the loveliest flowers most felicitously described. The description is often true even to a botanical eye; and in that, perhaps, lies the chief defect; not properly in the scientific

Life and Scenery. This was followed in 1821 by *The Village Minstrel and other Poems.* Thus brought into notice, and praised in all the magazines (especially in the *London Magazine*), the Northamptonshire Peasant Poet, as he was called, found himself, by donations from various patrons, relieved from the necessity of actual daily labour, and able to live on in his native village as a married man, in circumstances of modest comfort. He did not cease to write, though chiefly in the form of contributions to periodicals. Some unfortunate farming speculation, however, having wasted his small means, he fell into despondency, and became insane. He died in Northampton Lunatic Asylum in May 1864, after a seclusion of about thirty years. De Quincey writes of him here as if not fully aware of such a fatal decline of poor Clare's life.—M.

accuracy, but that, in searching after this too earnestly, the feeling is sometimes too much neglected. However, taken as a whole, his poems have a very novel quality of merit, though a quality too little, I fear, in the way of public notice. Messrs. Taylor & Hessey had been very kind to him; and, through them, the late Lord Fitzwilliam had settled an annuity upon him. In reality, the annuity had been so far increased, I believe, by the publishers as to release him from the necessities of daily toil. He had thus his time at his own command; and, in 1824, perhaps upon some literary scheme, he came up to London, where, by a few noble families and by his liberal publishers, he was welcomed in a way that, I fear, from all I heard, would but too much embitter the contrast with his own humble opportunities of enjoyment in the country. The contrast of Lord Radstock's brilliant parties, and the glittering theatres of London, would have but a poor effect in training him to bear that want of excitement which even already, I had heard, made his rural life but too insupportable to his mind. It is singular that what most fascinated his rustic English eye was not the gorgeous display of English beauty, but the French style of beauty, as he saw it amongst the French actresses in Tottenham Court Road. He seemed, however, oppressed by the glare and tumultuous existence of London; and, being ill at the time, from an affection of the liver, which did not, of course, tend to improve his spirits, he threw a weight of languor upon any attempt to draw him out into conversation. One thing, meantime, was very honourable to him,—that even in this season of dejection he would uniformly become animated when anybody spoke to him of Wordsworth—animated with the most hearty and almost rapturous spirit of admiration. As regarded his own poems, this admiration seemed to have an unhappy effect of depressing his confidence in himself. It is unfortunate, indeed, to gaze too closely upon models of colossal excellence. Compared with those of his own class, I feel satisfied that Clare will always maintain an honourable place.

Very different, though originally in the very same class of rustic labourers and rustic poets (a fact which I need not disguise, since he proclaims it himself upon every occasion

with a well-directed pride), is another of that London society in 1821-23 : viz. Allan Cunningham.[1] About this author I had a special interest. I had read, and with much pleasure, a volume called "Nithisdale and Galloway Song," which professed to contain fugitive poems of that country, gathered together by Mr. Cromek, the engraver ; the same person, I believe, who published a supplementary volume to Dr. Currie's edition of Burns. The whole of these, I had heard, were a forgery by Allan Cunningham[2] ; and one, at any rate, was so—by far the most exquisite gem in the volume. It was a fragment of only three stanzas ; and the situation must be supposed that of a child lying in a forest amongst the snow, just at the point of death. The child must be supposed to speak :—

"Gone were but the cold,
And gone were but the snow,
I could sleep in the wild woods,
Where the primroses blow.

"Cold's the snow at my head,
And cold's the snow at my feet ;
And the finger of death's at my eyes ;
Closing them to sleep.

"Let none tell my father,
Or my mother so dear ;
I'll meet them both in heaven,
At the spring-time of the year."

These lines of Allan Cunningham (so I call him, for so he called himself upon his visiting cards) had appeared to me so

[1] Allan Cunningham, born in Dumfriesshire in 1784, and brought up as a stone-mason, had gone to London in 1810, and had become clerk of the works to the sculptor Chantrey in 1814. At the time when De Quincey became acquainted with him, he was writing for London newspapers and periodicals, and was known also as the author (1) of nearly all the pieces of verse that had appeared under the guise of recovered old Scottish fragments in Cromek's *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, published in 1810, (2) of a drama called *Sir Marmaduke Maxwell*, (3) of two volumes of *Traditional Tales of the English and Scottish Peasantry*. To these, before his death in October 1842, were to be added a goodly number of other productions—poems, novels, and biographies.—M.

[2] See preceding footnote.—M.

exquisite a breathing of the pastoral muse that, had it been for these alone, I should have desired to make his acquaintance.[1] But I had also read some papers on gipsy life, embodying several striking gipsy traditions, by the same author. These were published in early numbers of *Blackwood's Magazine*, and had, apparently, introduced situations, and scenes, and incidents, from the *personal* recollections of the author. Such was my belief, at least. In parts, they were impressively executed; and a singular contrast they afforded to the situation and daily life of the same Allan, planted and rooted, as it were, amongst London scenery. Allan was—(what shall I say? To a man of genius, I would not apply the coarse mercantile term of foreman; and the fact is that he stood on a more confidential footing than is implied by that term with his employer)—he was then a sort of right-hand man, an agent equally for mechanical and for intellectual purposes, to Chantrey the sculptor: he was an agent, also, in transactions not strictly either the one or the other; cases which may be called, therefore, mechanico-intellectual; or, according to a pleasant distinction of Professor Wilson's, he was an agent for the "coarse" arts as well as the "fine" arts, sometimes in separation, sometimes in union. This I mention, as arguing the versatility of his powers: few men beside himself could have filled a station running through so large a scale of duties. Accordingly, he measured out and

[1] De Quincey has not quoted the verses very correctly; and it is perhaps significant that he has Anglicised their wording. In Cunningham's original they run thus:—

"Gane were but the winter-cauld,
And gane were but the snaw,
I could sleep in wild woods,
Where primroses blaw.

"Cauld's the snaw at my head,
And cauld at my feet;
And the finger o' death's at my een,
Closing them to sleep.

"Let nane tell my father,
Or my mither sae dear;
I'll meet them baith in heaven
At the spring o' the year." M.

apportioned each day's work to the several working sculptors in Chantrey's yard: this was the most mechanical part of his services. On the other hand, at the opposite pole of his functions, he was often (I believe) found useful to Chantrey as an umpire in questions of taste, or, perhaps, as a suggester of original hints, in the very highest walks of the art. Various indications of natural disposition for these efforts, aided greatly and unfolded by daily conversation with all the artists and amateurs resorting to Chantrey's *studio*, will be found in his popular "Lives of the Painters and Sculptors." His particular opinions are, doubtless, often liable to question; but they show proof everywhere of active and *sincere* thinking: and in two of his leading peculiarities upon questions of *æsthetics* (to speak *Germanice*) I felt too close an approach in Cunningham to opinions which I had always entertained myself not to have been prejudiced very favourably in his behalf. They were these:—He avowed an unqualified scorn of Ossian; such a scorn as every man that ever looked at Nature with his own eyes, and not through books, must secretly entertain. Heavens! what poverty: secondly, what monotony: thirdly, what falsehood of imagery! Scorn, therefore, he avowed of Ossian; and, in the next place, scorn of the insipidities—when applied to the plastic arts (sculpture or painting)—embalmed by modern allegory. Britannia, supported by Peace on one side and Prosperity on the other, beckons to Inoculation—"Heavenly maid"—and to Vaccination in the rear, who, mounted upon the car of Liberality, hurls her spear at the dragon of Small-Pox-Hospitalism, &c., &c. But why quote instances of that which every stone-cutter's yard supplies in nauseous prodigality? These singularities of taste, at least speaking of Ossian[1] (for, as to allegory, it is rather tolerated by the public mind than

[1] With respect to Ossian, I have heard it urged, by way of an *argumentum ad hominem*, in arguing the case with myself, as a known devotee of Wordsworth, that he, Wordsworth, had professed honour for Ossian, by writing an epitaph for his supposed grave in *Glen Almain*. By no means: Wordsworth's fine lines are not upon the pseudo-Ossian of Macpherson, not upon the cataphysical one-stringed lutanist of Morven, but upon Ossian, the hero and the poet, of Gaelic tradition. We scorn the Ossian of 1766. No man scorns Ossian the son of Fingal of A.D. 366.

positively approved), plead thus far in any man's favour, that they argue a healthy sincerity of the sensibilities, not liable to be duped by the vague, the superficial, or the unreal, nor, finally, by precedent and authority.

Such were the grounds upon which I looked forward, with some pleasure, to my first interview with Allan Cunningham. This took place at a dinner given by my publishers, soon after the publication of the Opium Confessions; at which dinner, to say the truth, I soon after suspected (and with some vexation) that I had myself, unconsciously, played the part of lion. At that time I was ill, beyond what any man would believe who saw me out of bed: and, in the mere facility of unreflecting good nature, I had consented to attend, on the assurance that "only a friend or two" would be present. However, it proved to be a general gathering, "frequent and full," of all the wits, keen and brilliant, associated in the literary journal to which I had committed my earliest experiences. Dinner was fixed at "*half-past five, for six*"; and, from some mistake, it happened that I was amongst the earliest arrivals. As an invalid, or as the hero of the day, I was planted inexorably, without retreat, in the place of honour by the fireside; for the month was deep November. Judge of my despair when there began to file in one suspicious-looking fellow after another — (*suspicious* to me at that moment, because, by the expression of the eye, looking all made up for "play," and some of them for "mischief")—one after another, I say; annunciation upon annunciation succeeded with frightful rapidity, until the small back drawing-room of our host began to overflow. I believe the fashion of *not* introducing dinner visitors to each other was just then (1821) beginning to be popular; either for that reason, or not to overwhelm my weak spirits, I was not often summoned to this ceremony: but, on two or three more select arrivals, I *was:* in such cases I had to stand formal presentation to the parties. One of these was Mr. (no, he will be as angry as O'Gorman Mahon or The Chisholm if I say *Mr.*) Allan Cunningham; and from the light of a November fire I first saw reflected the dark flashing guerilla eye of Allan Cunningham. Dark it was, and deep with meaning; and the meaning, as in all cases of expressive eyes, was compre-

hensive, and therefore equivocal. On the whole, however, Allan Cunningham's expression did not belie his character, as afterwards made known to me: he was kind, liberal, hospitable, friendly; and his whole natural disposition, as opposed to his acquired, was genial and fervent. But he had acquired feelings in which I, as an Englishman, was interested painfully. In particular, like so many Scotsmen of *his* original rank, he had a prejudice—or, perhaps, that is not the word: it was no feeling that he had derived from experience—it was an old Scottish grudge: not a feeling that he indulged to his own private sensibilities, but to his *national* conscience:—a prejudice against Englishmen. He loved, perhaps, this and that Englishman, Tom and Jack; but he hated us English as a body: it was in vain to deny it. As is the master, such is the company; and too often, in the kind and hospitable receptions of Allan Cunningham and Mrs. Cunningham, or other Scottish families residing in London, I heard, not from the heads of the house, but from the visitors, rueful attacks upon us poor English, and above all, upon us poor Oxonians. Oxford received no mercy. O heavens! how my fingers itched to be amidst the row! Yet, oftentimes I had no pretext for intermixing in the dispute—if dispute it could be called, where, generally speaking, all were of one mind.

The fact is this:—Far be it from me to say anything of Mr. Allan Cunningham's original rank, had he not taken a pride (and a meritorious pride) in asserting it himself. Now, that granted, all is plain. The Scotch (or, to please the fancy of our Transtweedian brethren, the Scots [1]), in the lower orders of society, do not love the English. Much I could say on this subject, having lived in Scotland for six or seven years, and observed closely. The Scotch often plead that the English retaliate this dislike, and that no love is lost. I think otherwise; and, for the present, I will only report my experience on last Sunday night but one, January 28, 1838, in a coffee-room of Edinburgh. I refer to a day so recent, in order that the reader may understand how little I wish to

[1] It is remarkable that, for what mysterious reason I never could discover, thorough *Scotchmen* feel exceedingly angry at being so called, and demand, for some cabalistical cause, to be entitled *Scotsmen*.

rest upon any *selected* case : the chance case which happens to stand last in one's experience may be presumed to be a fair average case. Now, upon that evening, two gentlemen were sitting in a box together ; one of them an Englishman, one a Scotchman. High argument reigned between them. The Englishman alleged much and weighty matter, if it had been true, violently and harshly against the Scotch : the Scotchman replied firmly, but not warmly : the Englishman rejoined with fierceness ; both, at length, rose in a state of irritation, and went to the fire. As they went, the Scotchman offered his card. The Englishman took it : and, without so much as looking at it, stuffed it into the fire. Upon this, up started *six* gentlemen in a neighbouring box, exclaiming to the *soi-disant* Englishman—"Sir, you are a disgrace to your country !" and oftentimes giving him to understand that, in their belief, he was *not* an Englishman. Afterwards, the quarrel advanced : the Englishman, throwing off his coat, or making motions to do so, challenged the Scotchman to a pugilistic combat. The Scotchman, who appeared thoroughly cool, and determined not to be provoked, persisted in his original determination of meeting his antagonist with pistols, were it on the next morning ; but steadily declined to fight on the coarse terms proposed. And thus the quarrel threatened to prove interminable. But how, meantime, did the neutral part of the company (all, by accident, Englishmen) conduct themselves towards their own countryman ? Him they justly viewed as the unprovoked aggressor, and as the calumniator of Scotland in a way that no provocation could have justified. One and all, they rose at length ; declared the conduct of their countryman insufferable ; and two or three of them, separately, offered their cards, as willing to meet him either on the next morning, or any morning when his convenience might allow, by way of evading any personal objection he might plead to his original challenger. The Englishman (possibly [1] a Scotchman) peremptorily declined all challenges.

[1] "*Possibly a Scotchman*," and very probably ; for there are no more bitter enemies of Scotland and Scotchmen, and all things Scotch, than banished Scotchmen—who may be called renegade Scotchmen. There is no enemy like an old friend ; and many a Scotchman (or

"What! six or seven upon one?"

"Oh no, sir!" the answer was; "not so: amongst Englishmen, if you *are* one, you must be well aware that no man meets with foul play: any one of ourselves would protect you against the man that should offer less than fair play to yourself."

The libeller, however, entrenched himself in his determination to hear of no pistol warfare; and hence, though two of the Englishmen were of colossal build, and well able to have smashed his pugilistic pretensions, yet, as all but himself were opposed to that mode of fighting, he, in fact, took shelter under his own limited mode of offering satisfaction. The others would not fight as he, nor he as they; and thus, all openings being closed to any honourable mode of settling the dispute, at the request of the company, the master of the coffee-room, with his long "tail" of waiters, advanced to him with a quiet demeanour, but with words so persuasive as induced him quietly to withdraw. And so terminated the dispute.

And now, let me ask, Is an Englishman likely to meet with six Scotchmen in London starting up on behalf of calumniated England? O no; painful it is to tell of men whom we, English, view as our brothers, and whose land, and institutions, and literature, have in our days been the subject of an absolute "*craze*," or, at all events, of a most generous enthusiasm in England, that nineteen out of twenty, among those who are of humble birth and connexions, are but too ready to join fervently in abuse of the land which shelters them, and supports their household charities. Scotchmen, you cannot deny it! Now, you hear from my story, which is not a fortnight old, how different, in the same circumstances, is the conduct of Englishmen. *All*, observe, joined, with one consent, in the same service—and there were six, without counting myself, who did not belong to either party; and not one of my countrymen stirred upon any principle of selfish honour,—none had been wounded,—but upon a generous regard to the outraged character of a country which at that moment was affording a shelter to themselves, which they

Scotsman—let us not forget *that*) remembers Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, simply as the city that ejected him.

loved and honoured, and which was accidentally without a defender.

Would that, upon such an impulse, I could have heard Allan Cunningham undertaking the defence of England or of Englishmen! But this I have *not* heard from any Scotchman, excepting only Professor Wilson; and he, to show the natural result of such generosity, is taxed with Anglomania by many of his countrymen. Allan Cunningham offended somewhat in this point, not so much in *act*, as by discovering his propensities. I, for my part, quarrelled also with his too oriental prostrations before certain regular authors—chiefly Sir Walter Scott and Southey. With respect to *them*, he professed to feel himself nobody, in a way which no large estimator of things as they are—of natural gifts, and their infinite distribution through an infinite scale of degrees, and the compensating accomplishments which take place in so vast a variety of forms — could easily tolerate. Allan Cunningham would say—"I don't think myself worthy to be accounted an author in comparison of such men"; and this he would say in a tone that too much had the sound of including, in his act of prostration, his hearer at the moment; who might very possibly disdain so absolute and unlimited an avowal of inferiority—a Chinese *kotou* so unconditional; knowing, as know he must, that, if in one talent or one accomplishment he were much inferior, hopelessly inferior, not the less in some other power, some other talent, some other accomplishment, he might have a right to hold himself greatly superior; nay, might have a right to say—"That power I possess in some degree; and Sir Walter Scott or Mr. Southey in no degree whatever." For example: *every* mode of philosophic power was denied to both of these authors; so that he who had that power, in *any* degree, might reasonably demur to this prostration performed before their images. With respect to Sir Walter Scott, in particular, the homage of Allan Cunningham was the less merited, as Sir Walter had not treated *him* with the respect due to a man of so much original genius: the aristocratic phrase "Honest Allan" expressed little of the courtesy due from one man of letters to another.[1] And, in the meantime, whilst Allan Cunningham

[1] There seems to be some private *pique* of De Quincey against Sir

was thus ready to humble himself before a countryman of his own, who had not treated him, in public, with the proper consideration, he spoke of Wordsworth (but certainly with this excuse —that, in those days, he knew nothing at all of his works) with something like contempt : in fact, he had evidently adopted the faith of the wretched journals. This alienated my feelings from Cunningham, spite of his own kind and liberal nature ; nay, spite of his own natural genius.

Walter Scott in this passage ; and it is utterly untrue to the actual facts of the relations between Scott and Allan Cunningham, as they appear in Scott's various letters to Cunningham, and the other references to Cunningham to be found in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*. The relations, as they there appear, were peculiarly kindly and cordial on Scott's side, from his first salutation of Cunningham in London in 1820,—"Allan Cunningham, I am glad to see you,"—onwards. Take, by way of summary, even in Scott's most critical private mood, this entry in his diary, under date November 14, 1826, when he was on one of his last visits to London. "We breakfasted at honest Allan Cunningham's,—honest Allan, a leal and true Scotsman of the old cast. A man of genius besides, who only requires the tact of knowing when and where to stop, to attain the universal praise which ought to follow it. I look upon the alteration of 'It's hame and it's hame,' and 'A wet sheet and a flowing sea,' as among the best songs going. His prose has often admirable passages ; but he is obscure, and overlays his meaning, which will not do nowadays, when he who runs must read" [better surely "when he who reads must run"]. Two years later, it was Scott who, on another visit to London, breakfasting again with Cunningham, and looking round at the young Cunningham olive-branches at the table, asked, "What are you going to make of all these boys, Allan ?" and, having heard that one of them wanted to be a soldier, contrived that very day to obtain two Indian cadetships, one for this youth, and the other for any brother of his that cared to have it. The phrase "honest Allan," to which De Quincey takes exception, as if it were a phrase of aristocratic condescension, was no such thing on Scott's part (of *that* he was incapable), but a kindly stereotyped expression for that in Cunningham which seemed to Scott, as to all others who knew Cunningham, his dominant and most likeable characteristic. "A solid Dumfries stone-mason, at any rate," was Mrs. Carlyle's definition of him afterwards from 1834 to his death ; amplified thus by Carlyle himself in his *Reminiscences*—"His resort seemed to me much among Scotch city-people ; who presented him with punchbowls, etc. ; and in his own home that was chiefly the (unprofitable) people to be met. We admired always his shrewd sense for managing himself in strange London ; his stalwart healthy figure and ways (bright hazel eyes, bald open brow, sonorous hearty voice ; a tall, perpendicular, quietly manful-looking figure) ; and were sorry sincerely to lose him." What else is this than Scott's "honest Allan," seen by different eyes ?—M.

One—opinion shall I call it, fancy, or dream—of Allan Cunningham's is singular enough to deserve mention: he maintained that the Scottish musical airs must have an eternal foundation in nature—that is to say, must have a co-eternal existence with the musical sense—for the following most extraordinary reason; nay, considering that his veracity was unimpeachable, I may say marvellous reason: namely, that he, Cunningham, had, without any previous knowledge of these airs, invented all or most of them *proprio marte;* so that, like the archetypal ideas in some systems of philosophers, one might affirm, upon his representation of things, that Scottish airs were eternally present to the ear of the Demiurgus, and eternally producing themselves afresh. This seemed fanciful, if not extravagant; and one at least of Cunningham's works—that which relates to Robert Bruce—is also extravagant in an outrageous degree.[1] And, by the way, on that ground, I should have guessed him to be a man of genius, were there even no other ground; for no man but a man of genius, and with the inequality of genius, can in one state of mind write beautifully, and in another write the merest extravagance; nay (with Cunningham's cordial assent I presume that I may say), awful extravagance.

Meantime, in practical life, Cunningham was anything but extravagant: he was (as I have said), in a high intellectual sense, and in the merest mechanical sense, the right-hand man of Chantrey, whom, by the way, he always spoke of with the highest and evidently the sincerest respect: he was his right-hand man, also, in a middle sense, or, as I have said, a mechanico-intellectual way. For example, he purchased all the marble for Chantrey,—which might require, perhaps, mixed qualifications; he distributed the daily labours of the workmen,—which must have required such as were purely mechanic. He transacted, also, all the negotiations for choosing the site of monuments to be erected in Westminster Abbey; a commission which might frequently demand some diplomatic address in the conduct of the negotiations with the Abbey authorities,—a function of his duties which chiefly regarded the interest of his principal, Sir Francis Chantrey,—as

[1] Perhaps his *King Bruce's Bowl: a Dramatic Legend of Galloway.*—M.

also a just eye for the effect of a monument, combined with a judicious calculation of the chances it had, at one point rather than another, for catching the public notice: this latter function of his complex office regarding mainly the interests of the defunct person or his relations, and those of Chantrey only in a secondary way.

This aspect of Cunningham's official or ministerial life reminds me, by the way, of the worst aspect under which his nationality or civic illiberality revealed itself,—an illiberality which here took the shape of bigotry. A Scotchman, or Scotsman, who happens to hate England, is sure *à fortiori* to hate the English Church; which, on account of its surplice, its organs, its cathedrals, and its mitred prelates, he has been taught to consider as the sister of the Babylonian Rome. Strange, indeed, that the Scottish Church should have been the favourite Church of the poor, which began so undeniably upon the incitement of the rich. They, the rich and the aristocratic, had revelled in the spoils of the monastic orders at the dissolution of the Romish Church. Naturally unwilling to resign their booty, they promoted a Church built upon a principle of poverty and humility: a Church that would not seek to resume her plundered property. Under their political intrigues it was that all the contests arose in the seventeenth century: first, by slight prelusive efforts during the long reign of James the Sixth or First; and, secondly, by a determinate civil war in that of Charles the First and Second. But in this last case the "martyrs," as they are called—those who fought at Drumclog, &c.—waiving all question of their real temper and religious merits, were, upon one single ground, incapable of founding a National Church: they were too few: a small body reckoned by hundreds, and not by thousands, never could pretend to represent the million of souls, or upwards, to which even in those days the Scottish nation amounted. What I maintain, therefore, is that, no matter how the Presbyterian Church came to have its legal establishment revived and ratified, it cannot be pretended historically that this establishment owed much to the struggles in Charles the Second's days, by which (so far as affected at all) it was injured. This Church, dated from older times, went back to those times for sanction and for

arguments of its conformity to the national taste; seeing that, in those elder times, it did really count upon the great majority of the nation as its affectionate and zealous supporters: whereas, in the Cameronian days, none but the very slenderest minority, and that minority, again, not numbering any people of weight or consideration for either property or intelligence or talent—no party of any known account—no party who were even nominally known to the people of Scotland—had chosen, at any crisis in the reign of the second Charles, to join these religious malcontents. Much more might be said with truth; but this may suffice—that the insurrectionary movements in Scotland during that reign were, relatively to the state and to the public peace of Scotland, pretty much the same as the rising in the cotton districts at the instigation of Edwards, in the year ——, to the general stability of the British government at that era. The Church of Scotland, therefore, does not, in fact, connect itself—for any part of the impulse to which it owes its birth, however in words or false pretences it may do so—with any of the movements, whether prosperous for the moment or hopelessly ruinous, made about 1677 by the religious Whigs of Scotland. In fact, like the insurgent cotton-spinners, these turbulent people were chiefly from the west. "The Western" people they were then called, and the "Westlanders"—so little were they at that time supposed to represent Scotland. Such is the truth of History. Nevertheless, in our insurrectionary days (insurrectionary, I mean, by the character of the pretensions advanced, not by overt acts), it has been a delightful doctrine to lay the foundations of the Scottish Kirk in rebellion; and hence the false importance assigned to the Cameronian insurgents. And hence partly it has happened that Scottish nationality and hatred of England has peculiarly associated itself with the later Church History of Scotland; for, as to the earlier, and really important era of Scottish Church struggles with the civil power, the English were looked to as their brethren and effectual allies: and, as the Scottish Church necessarily recalls to the mind the anti-pole of the English Church, thus also it has happened that all symbols or exponents of the English Episcopal Church are, to a low-born Scottish patriot, so

many counter-symbols of his own national or patriotic prejudices.

Thus, or in some such way, it happened that Cunningham never showed his illiberality so strongly as with reference to his negotiations with Westminster Abbey. The "rapacity" and "avarice" of the Church of England is the open theme of his attacks in his paper upon Lord Byron's funeral; though, perhaps, he would find it hard to substantiate his charge. Notoriously the Church, whether as Dean and Chapter, or as Collegiate Corporations, or as Episcopal Sees, has ever been found the most lenient of all masters under which to hold property; and it is not very probable that the Church would suddenly change its character under a treaty with a popular artist.

However, if all his foibles or infirmities had been summed up, Allan Cunningham still remained a man to admire and love: and by comparison with those of his own order,—men raised, that is to say, by force of genius, from the lowest rank (the rank in *his* case of a working mason, as I have heard him declare),—his merits became best appreciable. The faults of men self-taught (the αὐτοδίδακτοι) and men self-raised are almost proverbial. The vanity and inflation of heart, the egotism and arrogance of such men, were as alien from the character of Cunningham as of any man I ever knew; and in other respects he was no less advantageously distinguished from his order. Hogg, for instance, was absolutely insufferable in conversation. Egotism the most pertinacious might have been excused; but the matter of this egotism was so trivial and insane, seldom relating to any higher subject than a conflict with "sawmon," that human patience could not weather the infliction. In Cunningham there was rarely an allusion to himself. Some people, it is true, might be annoyed by his too frequent allusions to his own personal strength and size, which he overrated; for they were not remarkable; or, if they had been, what does one man care about another man's qualities of person, this way or that, unless in so far as he may sometimes be called upon to describe them in order to meet the curiosity of others? But Cunningham's allusions of this kind, though troublesome at times, seemed always jocose, and did not argue any shade of

conceit. In more serious and natural subjects of vanity he seemed to be as little troubled with any morbid self-esteem. And, in all other respects, Cunningham was a whole world above his own order of self-raised men—not less in gravity, sense, and manliness of thought, than in the dignified respectability of his conduct. He was rising an inch in the world every day of his life; for his whole day, from sunrise to bedtime, was dedicated to active duties cheerfully performed. And, on this subject, one anecdote is remarkable, and deserves a lasting record among the memorials of literary men. I have mentioned and described his station and its manifold duties, in relation to Sir Francis Chantrey. Now, he has told me himself repeatedly,—and certainly, from my own observation and that of others, I have no doubt of his literal veracity,—that, in the course of his whole connexion with that eminent sculptor, he never borrowed one single hour from his ministerial labours on account of his principal, either to compose or to correct one of those many excellent, sometimes brilliant, pages, by which he has delighted so many thousands of readers, and won for himself a lasting name in the fine literature of modern England.

CHAPTER VI

STORY OF A LIBEL, WITH THOUGHTS ON DUELLING [1]

THIS mention of Allan Cunningham recalls to my recollection an affair which retains one part of its interest to this day, arising out of the very important casuistical question which it involves. We Protestant nations are in the habit of treating casuistry as a field of speculation false and baseless *per se;* nay, we regard it not so much in the light of a visionary and idle speculation, as one positively erroneous in its principles, and mischievous for its practical results. This is due in part to the disproportionate importance which the Church of Rome has always attached to casuistry ; making, in fact, this supplementary section of ethics take precedency of its elementary doctrines in their Catholic simplicity : as though the plain and broad highway of morality were scarcely ever the safe road, but that every case of human conduct were to be treated as an exception, and never as lying within the universal rule : and thus forcing the simple, honest-minded Christian to travel upon a tortuous by-road, in which he could not advance a step in security without a spiritual

[1] From *Tait's Magazine* for February 1841. It appears there without any special title, but simply as one of the series of papers bearing the general title of "Sketches of Life and Manners from the Autobiography of an English Opium-Eater"—being in fact the last of the contributions to *Tait* under that title. The running headlines to the right-hand pages, however, are "Duelling," "Libellous Attack by a London Journal," and "Duelling" again. The title we have chosen describes the paper pretty exactly. It consists of thoughts on duelling, but with an autobiographic London reminiscence for their core.—M.

guide at his elbow; and, in fact, whenever the hair-splitting casuistry is brought, with all its elaborate machinery, to bear upon the simplicities of household life, and upon the daily intercourse of the world, there it has the effect (and is expressly cherished by the Romish Church with a view to the effect) of raising the spiritual pastor into a sort of importance which corresponds to that of an attorney. The consulting casuist is, in fact, to all intents and purposes, a moral attorney. For, as the plainest man, with the most direct purposes, is yet reasonably afraid to trust himself to his own guidance in any affair connected with questions of law; so also, when taught to believe that an upright intention and good sense are equally insufficient in morals as they are in law to keep him from stumbling or from missing his road, he comes to regard a conscience-keeper as being no less indispensable for his daily life and conversation than his legal agent, or his professional "man of business," for the safe management of his property, and for his guidance amongst the innumerable niceties which beset the real and inevitable intricacies of rights and duties, as they grow out of human enactments and a complex condition of society.

Fortunately for the happiness of human nature and its dignity, those holier rights and duties which grow out of laws heavenly and divine, written by the finger of God upon the heart of every rational creature, are beset by no such intricacies, and require, therefore, no such vicarious agency for their practical assertion. The primal duties of life, like the primal charities, are placed high above us—legible to every eye, and shining like the stars with a splendour that is read in every clime, and translates itself into every language at once. Such is the imagery of Wordsworth. But this is otherwise estimated in the policy of papal Rome; and casuistry usurps a place in her spiritual economy to which our Protestant feelings demur. So far, however, the question between us and Rome is a question of degrees. They push casuistry into a general and unlimited application; we, if at all, into a very narrow one. But another difference there is between us, even more important; for it regards no mere excess in the *quantity* of range allowed to casuistry, but in the *quality* of its speculations; and which it is (more than

any other cause) that has degraded the office of casuistical learning amongst us. Questions are raised, problems are entertained, by the Romish casuistry, which too often offend against all purity and manliness of thinking. And that objection occurs forcibly here which Southey (either in the *Quarterly Review* or in his "Life of Wesley") has urged and expanded with regard to the Romish and also the Methodist practice of *auricular confession:* viz.—that, as it *is* practically managed, not leaving the person engaged in this act to confess according to the light of his own conscience, but at every moment interfering, on the part of the confessor, to suggest *leading questions* (as lawyers call them), and to throw the light of confession upon parts of the experience which native modesty would leave in darkness,—so managed, the practice of confession is undoubtedly the most demoralizing practice known to any Christian society. Innocent young persons, whose thoughts would never have wandered out upon any impure images or suggestions, have their ingenuity and their curiosity sent roving upon unlawful quests; they are instructed to watch what else would pass undetained in the mind, and would pass unblamably, on the Miltonic principle ("Evil into the mind of God or man may come unblamed," &c.)[1] Nay, which is worst of all, unconscious or semi-conscious thoughts and feelings or natural impulses, rising, like a breath of wind under some motion of nature, and again dying away, because not made the subject of artificial review and interpretation, are now brought powerfully under the focal light of the consciousness; and whatsoever is once made the subject of consciousness can never again have the privilege of gay, careless thoughtlessness—the privilege by which the mind, like the lamps of a mail-coach, moving rapidly through the midnight woods, illuminate, for one instant, the foliage or sleeping umbrage of the thickets, and, in the next instant, have quitted them, to carry their radiance forward upon endless successions of objects. This happy

[1] A serious misquotation. The passage is in *Paradise Lost*, v. 117-119, where Adam, consoling Eve after her dream of having tasted the forbidden fruit, says—

> "Evil into the mind of God or Man
> May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
> No spot or blame behind."—M.

privilege is forfeited for ever when the pointed significancy of the confessor's questions, and the direct knowledge which he plants in the mind, have awakened a guilty familiarity with every form of impurity and unhallowed sensuality.

Here, then, are objections, sound and deep, to casuistry, as managed in the Romish Church. Every possible objection ever made to auricular confession applies with equal strength to casuistry ; and some objections, besides these, are peculiar to itself. And yet, after all, these are but objections to casuistry as treated by a particular Church. Casuistry in itself—casuistry as a possible, as a most useful, and a most interesting speculation—remains unaffected by any one of these objections ; for none applies to the essence of the case, but only to its accidents, or separable adjuncts. Neither is this any curious or subtle observation of little practical value. The fact is as far otherwise as can be imagined : the defect to which I am here pointing is one of the most clamorous importance.

Of what value, let me ask, is Paley's Moral Philosophy ? What is its imagined use ? Is it that in substance it reveals any new duties, or banishes as false any old ones ? No ; but because the known and admitted duties—duties recognised in *every* system of ethics—are here placed (successfully or not) upon new foundations, or brought into relation with new principles not previously perceived to be in any relation whatever. This, in fact, is the very meaning of a theory [1] or

[1] No terms of art are used so arbitrarily, and with such perfect levity, as the terms *hypothesis*, *theory*, *system*. Most writers use one or other with the same indifference that they use in constructing the title of a novel, or, suppose, of a pamphlet, where the phrases *thoughts*, or *strictures*, or *considerations*, upon so and so, are used *ad libitum*. Meantime, the distinctions are essential. That is properly an *hypothesis* where the question is about a cause : certain phenomena are known and given : the object is to place below these phenomena a basis (*ὑπόθεσις*) capable of supporting them, and accounting for them. Thus, if you were to assign a cause sufficient to account for the *aurora borealis*, that would be an hypothesis. But a theory, on the other hand, takes a multitude of facts all disjointed, or, at most, suspected of some interdependency : these it takes and places under strict laws of relation to each other. But here there is no question of a cause. Finally, a system is the synthesis of a theory and an hypothesis : it states the relations as amongst an undigested mass, *rudis indigestaque*

contemplation (Θεωρία), when A, B, C, old and undisputed facts, have their relations to each other developed. It is not, therefore, for any practical benefit in action, so much as for the satisfaction of the understanding when reflecting on a man's own actions, the wish to see what his conscience or his heart prompts reconciled to general laws of thinking,—this is the particular service performed by Paley's Moral Philosophy. It does not so much profess to tell *what* you are to do, as the *why* and the *wherefore;* and, in particular, to show how one rule of action may be reconciled to some other rule of equal authority, but which, apparently, is in hostility to the first. Such, then, is the utmost and highest aim of the Paleyian or the Ciceronian ethics, as they exist. Meantime, the grievous defect to which I have adverted above—a defect equally found in all systems of morality, from the Nichomachean ethics of Aristotle downwards—is the want of a casuistry by way of supplement to the main system, and governed by the spirit of the very same laws which the writer has previously employed in the main body of his work. And the immense superiority of this supplementary section to the main body of the system would appear in this, that the latter, I have just been saying, aspires only to guide the reflecting judgment in harmonizing the different parts of his own conduct so as to bring them under the same law, whereas the casuistical section, in the supplement, would seriously undertake to guide the conduct in many doubtful cases of action—cases which are so regarded by all thinking persons.

Take, for example, the case which so often arises between master and servant, and in so many varieties of form: a case which requires you to decide between some violation of your conscience, on the one hand, as to veracity, by saying something that is not strictly true, as well as by evading (and that is often done) all answer to inquiries which you are unable to meet satisfactorily—a violation of your conscience to this extent, and in this way; or, on the other hand, a still more painful violation of your conscience in consigning deliberately

moles, of known phenomena; and it assigns a basis for the whole, as in an hypothesis. These distinctions would become vivid and convincing by the help of proper illustrations.

some young woman—faulty, no doubt, and erring, but yet likely to derive a lesson from her own errors and the risk to which they have exposed her—consigning her, I say, to ruin, by refusing her a character, and thus shutting the door upon all the paths by which she might retrace her steps. This I state as one amongst the many cases of conscience daily occurring in the common business of the world. It would surprise any reader to find how many they are; in fact, a very large volume might be easily collected of such cases as are of ordinary occurrence. *Casuistry!* the very word *casuistry* expresses the science which deals with such *cases;* for, as a case in the declension of a noun means a falling away or a deflection from the upright nominative (*rectus*), so a case in ethics implies some falling off or deflection from the high road of catholic morality. Now, of all such cases, one, perhaps the most difficult to manage, the most intractable, whether for consistency of thinking as to the theory of morals, or for consistency of action as to the practice of morals, is the case of DUELLING.

As an introduction, I will state my story—the case for the casuist; and then say one word on the reason of the case.

First, let me report the case of a friend—a distinguished lawyer at the English bar. I had the circumstances from himself, which lie in a very small compass; and, as my friend is known, to a proverb almost, for his literal accuracy in all statements of fact, there need be no fear of any mistake as to the main points of the case. He was one day engaged in pleading before the Commissioners of Bankruptcy; a court then newly appointed, and differently constituted, I believe, in some respects, from its present form. That particular commissioner, as it happened, who presided at that moment when the case occurred, had been recently appointed, and did not know the faces of those who chiefly practised in the court. All things, indeed, concurred to favour his mistake: for the case itself came on in a shape or in a stage which was liable to misinterpretation, from the partial view which it allowed of the facts, under the hurry of the procedure: and my friend, also, unluckily, had neg-

lected to assume his barrister's costume, so that he passed, in the commissioner's appreciation, as an attorney. "What if he *had* been an attorney?" it may be said: "was he, therefore, less entitled to courtesy or justice?" Certainly not; nor is it my business to apologize for the commissioner. But it may easily be imagined, and making allowances for the confusion of hurry and imperfect knowledge of the case, it *does* offer something in palliation of the judge's rashness, that, amongst a large heap of "Old Bailey" attorneys who notoriously attended this court for the express purpose of whitewashing their clients, and who were in bad odour as tricksters, he could hardly have been expected to make a special exception in favour of one particular man, who had not protected himself by the insignia of his order. His main error, however, lay in misapprehending the case: this misapprehension lent strength to the assumption that my friend was an "Old Bailey" (*i.e.* a sharking) attorney; whilst, on the other hand, that assumption lent strength to his misapprehension of the case. Angry interruptions began: these, being retorted or resented with just indignation, produced an irritation and ill-temper which, of themselves, were quite sufficient to raise a cloud of perplexity over any law process, and to obscure it for any understanding. The commissioner grew warmer and warmer; and, at length, he had the presumption to say—"Sir, you are a disgrace to your profession." When such sugar-plums, as Captain M'Turk the peacemaker observes, were flying between them, there could be no room for further parley. That same night the commissioner was waited on by a friend of the barrister's, who cleared up his own misconceptions to the disconcerted judge; placed him, even to his own judgment, thoroughly in the wrong; and then most courteously troubled him for a reference to some gentleman, who would arrange the terms of a meeting for the next day. The commissioner was too just and grave a man to be satisfied with himself, on a cool review of his own conduct. Here was a quarrel ripened into a mortal feud, likely enough to terminate in wounds, or, possibly, in death to one of the parties, which, on his side, carried with it no palliations from any provocation received, or from wrong and insult, in any form, sustained: these, in

an aggravated shape, could be pleaded by my friend, but with no opening for retaliatory pleas on the part of the magistrate. That name, again, of magistrate, increased his offence and pointed its moral: he, a conservator of the laws —he, a dispenser of equity, sitting even at the very moment on the judgment seat—*he* to have commenced a brawl, nay, to have fastened a quarrel upon a man even then of some consideration and of high promise; a quarrel which finally tended to this result—shoot or be shot! That commissioner's situation and state of mind, for the succeeding night, were certainly not enviable: like Southey's erring painter, who had yielded to the temptation of the subtle fiend,

> "With repentance his only companion he lay;
> And a dismal companion is she."

Meantime, my friend—what was *his* condition; and how did *he* pass the interval? I have heard him feelingly describe the misery, the blank anguish, of this memorable night. Sometimes it happens that a man's conscience is wounded: but this very wound is the means, perhaps, by which his feelings are spared for the present: sometimes his feelings are lacerated; but this very laceration makes the ransom for his conscience. Here, on the contrary, his feelings and his happiness were dimmed by the very same cause which offered pain and outrage to his conscience. He was, upon principle, a hater of duelling. Under any circumstances, he would have condemned the man who could, for a light cause, or almost for the weightiest, have so much as *accepted* a challenge. Yet, here he was positively *offering* a challenge; and to whom? To a man whom he scarcely knew by sight; whom he had never spoken to until this unfortunate afternoon; and towards whom (now that the momentary excitement of anger had passed away) he felt no atom of passion or resentment whatsoever. As a free "unhoused" young man, therefore, had he been such, without ties or obligations in life, he would have felt the profoundest compunction at the anticipation of any serious injury inflicted upon another man's hopes or happiness, or upon his own. But what was his real situation? He was a married man, married to the woman of his choice within a very few years: he was also a

father, having one most promising son, somewhere about three years old. His young wife and his son composed his family; and both were dependent, in the most absolute sense, for all they possessed or they expected—for all they had or ever could have—upon his own exertions. Abandoned by him, losing him, they forfeited, in one hour, every chance of comfort, respectability, or security from scorn and humiliation. The mother, a woman of strong understanding and most excellent judgment—good and upright herself—liable, therefore, to no habit of suspicion, and constitutionally cheerful, went to bed with her young son, thinking no evil. Midnight came, one, two o'clock; mother and child had long been asleep; nor did either of them dream of that danger which even now was yawning under their feet. The barrister had spent the hours from ten to two in drawing up his will, and in writing such letters as might have the best chance, in case of fatal issue to himself, for obtaining some aid to the desolate condition of those two beings whom he would leave behind unprotected and without provision. Oftentimes he stole into the bedroom, and gazed with anguish upon the innocent objects of his love, and, as his conscience now told him, of his bitterest perfidy. "Will you then leave us? Are you really going to betray us? Will you deliberately consign us to life-long poverty, and scorn, and grief?" These affecting apostrophes he seemed, in the silence of the night, to hear almost with bodily ears. Silent reproaches seemed written upon their sleeping features; and once, when his wife suddenly awakened under the glare of the lamp which he carried, he felt the strongest impulse to fly from the room; but he faltered, and stood rooted to the spot. She looked at him smilingly, and asked why he was so long in coming to bed. He pleaded an excuse, which she easily admitted, of some law case to study against the morning, or some law paper to draw. She was satisfied, and fell asleep again. He, however, fearing, above all things, that he might miss the time for his appointment, resolutely abided by his plan of not going to bed; for the meeting was to take place at Chalk Farm, and by half-past five in the morning: that is, about one hour after sunrise. One hour and a half before this time, in the gray dawn, just when the

silence of Nature and of mighty London was most absolute, he crept stealthily, and like a guilty thing, to the bedside of his sleeping wife and child; took what he believed might be his final look of them; kissed them softly; and, according to his own quotation from Coleridge's "Remorse,"

"in agony that could not be remembered,"

and a conflict with himself that defied all rehearsal, he quitted his peaceful cottage at Chelsea in order to seek for the friend who had undertaken to act as his second. He had good reason, from what he had heard on the night before, to believe his antagonist an excellent shot; and, having no sort of expectation that any interruption could offer to the regular progress of the duel, he, as the challenger, would have to stand the first fire; at any rate, conceiving this to be the fair privilege of the party challenged, he did not mean to avail himself of any proposal for drawing lots upon the occasion, even if such a proposal should happen to be made.

Thus far the affair had travelled through the regular stages of expectation and suspense; but the interest of the case, as a story, was marred and brought to an abrupt conclusion by the conduct of the commissioner. He was a man of known courage; but he also was a man of conscientious scruples, and, amongst other instances of courage, had the courage to own himself in the wrong. He felt that his conduct hitherto had not been wise or temperate, and that he would be sadly aggravating his original error by persisting in aiming at a man's life, upon which life hung also the happiness of others, merely because he had offered to that man a most unwarranted insult. Feeling this, he thought fit, at first coming upon the ground, to declare that, having learned, since the scene in court, the real character of his antagonist, and the extent of his own mistake, he was resolved to brave all appearances and ill-natured judgments by making an ample apology; which, accordingly, he did; and so the affair terminated.

I have thought it right, however, to report the circumstances, both because they were really true in every particular, but, much more, because they place in strong relief one feature which is often found in these cases, and which is

allowed far too little weight in distributing the blame between the parties: to this I wish to solicit the reader's attention. During the hours of this never-to-be-forgotten night of wretchedness and anxiety, my friend's reflection was naturally forced upon the causes which had produced it. In the world's judgment, he was aware that he himself, as the one charged with the most weighty responsibility (those who depend upon him being the most entirely helpless), would have to sustain by much the heaviest censure: and yet what was the real proportion of blame between the parties? He, when provoked and publicly insulted, had retorted angrily: that was almost irresistible under the constitution of human feelings; the meekest of men could scarcely do less. But surely the true *onus* of wrong and moral responsibility for all which might follow rested upon that party who, giving way to mixed impulses of rash judgment and of morose temper, had allowed himself to make a most unprovoked assault upon the character of one whom he did not know; well aware that such words, uttered publicly by a person in authority, must, by some course or other, be washed out and cancelled; or, if not, that the party submitting to such defamatory insults would at once exile himself from the society and countenance of his professional brethren. Now, then, in all justice, it should be so ordered that the weight of public indignation might descend upon him, whoever he might be (and, of course, the more heavily, according to the authority of his station, and his power of inflicting wrong), who should thus wantonly abuse his means of influence to the dishonour or injury of an unoffending party. We clothe a public officer with power, we arm him with influential authority over public opinion, not that he may apply these authentic sanctions to the backing of his own malice and giving weight to his private caprices: and, wherever such abuse takes place, then it should be so contrived that some reaction in behalf of the injured person might receive a sanction equally public. And, upon this point, I shall say a word or two more, after first stating my own case; a case where the outrage was far more insufferable, more deliberate, and more malicious; but, on the other hand, in this respect less effectual for injury, that it carried with it no sanction

from any official station or repute in the unknown parties who offered the wrong.

The circumstances were these :—In 1824, I had come up to London upon an errand in itself sufficiently vexatious—of fighting against pecuniary embarrassments by literary labours ; but, as had always happened hitherto, with very imperfect success, from the miserable thwartings I incurred through the deranged state of the liver. My zeal was great, and my application was unintermitting ; but spirits radically vitiated,—chiefly through the direct mechanical depression caused by one important organ deranged, and secondly by a reflex effect of depression through my own thoughts in estimating my prospects,—together with the aggravation of my case by the inevitable exile from my own mountain home : all this reduced the value of my exertions in a deplorable way. It was rare, indeed, that I could satisfy my own judgment, even tolerably, with the quality of any literary article I produced ; and my power to make sustained exertions drooped, in a way I could not control, every other hour of the day : insomuch that, what with parts to be cancelled, and what with whole days of torpor and pure defect of power to produce anything at all, very often it turned out that all my labours were barely sufficient (sometimes not sufficient) to meet the current expenses of my residence in London. Three months' literary toil terminated, at times, in a result = 0 ; the whole *plus* being just equal to the *minus* created by two separate establishments, and one of them in the most expensive city of the world. Gloomy, indeed, was my state of mind at that period : for, though I made prodigious efforts to recover my health (sensible that all other efforts depended for their result upon this elementary effort, which was the *conditio sine qua non* for the rest), yet all availed me not ; and a curse seemed to settle upon whatever I then undertook. Such was my frame of mind on reaching London : in fact it never varied. One canopy of murky clouds (a copy of that dun atmosphere which settles so often upon London) brooded for ever upon my spirits, which were in one uniformly low key of cheerless despondency ; and, on this particular morning, my depression had been deeper than usual, from the effects of a long con-

tinuous journey of three hundred miles, and of exhaustion from want of sleep. I had reached London, about six o'clock in the morning, by one of the northern mails; and, resigning myself, as usual in such cases, to the chance destination of the coach, after delivering our bags in Lombard Street, I was driven down to a great city hotel. Here there were hot baths; and, somewhat restored by this luxurious refreshment, about eight o'clock I was seated at a breakfast table; upon which, in a few minutes, as an appendage not less essential than the tea-service, one of the waiters laid that morning's *Times*, just reeking from the press. The *Times*, by the way, is notoriously the leading journal of Europe anywhere; but in London, and more peculiarly in the city quarter of London, it enjoys a pre-eminence scarcely understood elsewhere. Here it is not *a* morning paper, but *the* morning paper: no other is known, no other is cited as authority in matters of fact. Strolling with my eye indolently over the vast Babylonian confusion of the enormous columns, naturally, as one of the *corps littéraire*, I found my attention drawn to those regions of the paper which announced forthcoming publications. Amongst them was a notice of a satirical journal, very low priced, and already advanced to its third or fourth number. My heart palpitated a little on seeing myself announced as the principal theme for the malice of the current number. The reader must not suppose that I was left in any doubt as to the quality of the notice with which I had been honoured, and that, by possibility, I was solacing my vanity with some anticipation of honeyed compliments. That, I can assure him, was made altogether impossible by the kind of language which flourished in the very foreground of the *programme*, and even of the running title. The exposure and *depluming* (to borrow a good word from the fine old rhetorician Fuller) of the leading "humbugs" of the age—*that* was announced as the regular business of the journal: and the only question which remained to be settled was the more or less of the degree; and also one other question even more interesting still, viz. whether personal abuse were intermingled with literary. Happiness, as I have experienced in other periods of my life, deep, domestic happiness, makes a man comparatively care-

less of ridicule, of sarcasm, or of abuse. But calamity—the degradation in the world's eye of every man who is fighting with pecuniary difficulties—exasperates, beyond all that can be imagined, a man's sensibility to insult. He is even apprehensive of insult—tremulously, fantastically apprehensive—where none is intended ; and, like Wordsworth's shepherd, with his very understanding consciously abused and depraved by his misfortunes, is ready to say, at all hours—

> "And every man I met or faced,
> Methought he knew some ill of me."

Some notice, perhaps, the newspaper had taken of this new satirical journal, or some extracts might have been made from it ; at all events, I had ascertained its character so well that, in this respect, I had nothing to learn. It now remained to get the number which professed to be seasoned with my particular case ; and it may be supposed that I did not loiter over my breakfast after this discovery. Something which I saw or suspected amongst the significant hints of a paragraph or advertisement made me fear that there might possibly be insinuations or downright assertion in the libel requiring instant public notice ; and, therefore, on a motive of prudence, had I even otherwise felt that indifference for slander which now I *do* feel, but which, in those years, morbid irritability of temperament forbade me to affect, I should still have thought it right to look after the work ; which now I did : and, by nine o'clock in the morning—an hour at which few people had seen me for years—I was on my road to Smithfield. Smithfield ? Yes ; even so. All known and respectable publishers having declined any connexion with the work, the writers had facetiously resorted to this *aceldama*, or slaughtering quarter of London, —to these vast shambles, as typical, I suppose, of their own slaughtering spirit. On my road to Smithfield, I could not but pause for one moment to reflect on the pure defecated malice which must have prompted an attack upon myself. Retaliation or retort it could not pretend to be. To most literary men, scattering their written reviews, or their opinions, by word or mouth, to the right and the left with all possible carelessness, it never can be matter of surprise,

or altogether of complaint (unless a question of degrees), that angry notices, or malicious notices, should be taken of themselves. Few, indeed, of literary men can pretend to any absolute innocence from offence, and from such even as may have seemed deliberate. But I, for my part, could. Knowing the rapidity with which all remarks *of* literary men *upon* literary men are apt to circulate, I had studiously and resolutely forborne to say anything, whether of a writer or a book, unless where it happened that I could say something that would be felt as complimentary. And, as to written reviews, so much did I dislike the assumption of judicial functions and authority over the works of my own brother authors and contemporaries, that I have, in my whole life, written only two; at that time only one; and that one, though a review of an English novel, was substantially a review of a German book, taking little notice, or none, of the English translator; for, although he, a good German scholar now, was a very imperfect one at that time, and was, therefore, every way open to criticism, I had evaded this invidious office applied to a novice in literature, and (after pointing out one or two slight blemishes of trivial importance) all that I said of a general nature was a compliment to him upon the felicity of his verses. Upon the German author I was, indeed, severe, but hardly as much as he deserved.[1]

[1] The reference here is to two articles by De Quincey in the *London Magazine* for August and September 1824, the first criticising Carlyle's translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (which had been published anonymously that year in Edinburgh), and the second criticising the novel itself, and Goethe generally. De Quincey's present account of the first of these articles is far from correct. Instead of "evading the invidious office of criticism as applied to a novice in literature," instead of "taking little notice, or none, of the English translator," instead of merely "pointing out one or two slight blemishes of trivial importance," the article was a very savage onslaught indeed on the literary novice—attacking him for his Scotticisms, his misrenderings of the original, and the general awkwardness of his style, and having hardly a word of praise for him, except at the close, where his metrical renderings of the German pieces of verse in the novel are allowed to have been "executed with very considerable delicacy and elegance." That Carlyle himself by no means relished the article at the time, but regarded it as a rather serious stumbling-block in his way,—especially as it was known to be by De Quincey,—appears from a passage in his *Reminiscences*, where he describes the effect upon him

The other review was a tissue of merriment and fun; and, though, it is true, I *did* hear that the fair authoress was offended at one jest, I may safely leave it for any reader to judge between us. She, or her brother, amongst other Latin epigrams, had one addressed to a young lady *upon the loss of her keys*. This the substance of the lines showed to have been the intention; but (by a very venial error in one who was writing Latin from early remembrance of it, and not in the character of a professing scholar) the title was written *De clavis* instead of *De clavibus amissis;* upon which I observed that the writer had selected a singular topic for condolence with a young lady,—viz. "*on the loss of her cudgels*" (*clavis*, as an ablative, coming clearly from *clava*). This (but I can hardly believe it) was said to have offended Miss H.; and, at all events, this was the extent of my personalities.[1] Many kind things I had said; much honour, much admiration, I had professed at that period of my life, in occasional papers or private letters, towards many of my contemporaries, but never anything censorious or harsh; and simply on a principle of courteous forbearance which I have felt to be due towards those who are brothers of the same liberal profession with one's self. I could not feel,

of this "cleverish and completely hostile criticism" when he read it in a bookseller's shop one rainy day in Birmingham. Since then, however, Carlyle and De Quincey had seen a good deal of each other,—De Quincey's tendency to permanent residence in Edinburgh having begun in those years of Carlyle's early married life, from 1826 to 1828, during which he was an Edinburgh householder, and the acquaintance then formed between the two (with much admiration on Carlyle's side at least), by frequent meetings in Carlyle's house at Comely Bank or elsewhere, having been kept up by a letter or two to De Quincey from Carlyle's solitude at Craigenputtock. The recollection of the attack on Carlyle had necessarily, in these circumstances, been a sore point with De Quincey; and hence his wish, in the present paper, to minimise it as far as possible. Possibly he had forgotten how severe it was. Carlyle, one has to remember, was a far better known man in 1841 than he had been in 1824. He had been resident for six years in London; and not only his *Miscellaneous Essays*, but also his *French Revolution*, his *Sartor Resartus*, his *Chartism*, and his *Hero-Worship* had been given to the world.—M.

[1] The reference here is to a review by De Quincey of "Miss Hawkins's Anecdotes." It will appear in its proper place in these volumes.—M.

when reviewing my whole life, that in any one instance, by act, by word, or by intention, I had offered any unkindness, far less any wrong or insult, towards a brother author. I was at a loss, therefore, to decipher the impulse under which the malignant libeller could have written, in making (as I suspected already) my private history the subject of his calumnies. Jealousy, I have since understood, jealousy, was the foundation of the whole. A little book of mine had made its way into the drawing-rooms,[1] where some book of his had not been heard of.

On reaching Smithfield, I found the publisher to be a medical bookseller, and, to my surprise, having every appearance of being a grave, respectable man; notwithstanding this undeniable fact, that the libellous journal, to which he thought proper to affix his sanction, trespassed on decency, not only by its slander, but, in some instances, by downright obscenity; and, worse than that, by prurient solicitations to the libidinous imagination, through blanks, seasonably interspersed. I said nothing to him in the way of inquiry; for I easily guessed that the knot of writers who were here clubbing their *virus* had not so ill combined their plans as to leave them open to detection by a question from any chance stranger. Having, therefore, purchased a set of the journal, then amounting to three or four numbers, I went out; and in the elegant promenades of Smithfield I read the lucubrations of my libeller. Fit academy for such amenities of literature! Fourteen years have gone by since then; and, possibly, the unknown hound who yelled on that occasion among this kennel of curs may long since have buried himself and his malice in the grave. Suffice it here to say that, calm as I am now, and careless on recalling the remembrance of this brutal libel, at that time I was convulsed with wrath. As respected myself, there was a depth of malignity in the article which struck me as perfectly mysterious. How could any man have made an enemy so profound, and not even have suspected it? *That* puzzled me. For, with respect to the other objects of attack, such as Sir Humphry Davy, &c., it was clear that the malice was assumed; that, at most, it

[1] The *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, which had been out in book-form since 1822.—M.

was the gay impertinence of some man upon town, armed with triple Irish brass from original defect of feeling, and willing to raise an income by running amuck at any person just then occupying enough of public interest to make the abuse saleable. But, in my case, the man flew like a bulldog at the throat, with a pertinacity and *acharnement* of malice that would have caused me to laugh immoderately, had it not been for one intolerable wound to my feelings. These mercenary libellers, whose stiletto is in the market, and at any man's service for a fixed price, callous and insensible as they are, yet retain enough of the principles common to human nature, under every modification, to know where to plant their wounds. Like savage hackney coachmen, they know where there is a *raw*. And the instincts of human nature teach them that every man is vulnerable through his female connexions. There lies his honour; there his strength; there his weakness. In their keeping is the heaven of his happiness; in them and through them the earthy of its fragility. Many there are who do not feel the *maternal* relation to be one in which any excessive freight of honour or sensibility is embarked. Neither is the name of *sister*, though tender in early years, and impressive to the fireside sensibilities, universally and through life the same magical sound. A sister is a creature whose very property and tendency (*qua* sister) is to alienate herself, not to gather round your centre. But the names of *wife* and *daughter*, these are the supreme and starry charities of life: and he who, under a mask, fighting in darkness, attacks you there, that coward has you at disadvantage. I stood in those hideous shambles of Smithfield: upwards I looked to the clouds, downwards to the earth, for vengeance. I trembled with excessive wrath—such was my infirmity of feeling at that time, and in that condition of health; and, had I possessed forty thousand lives, all, and every one individually, I would have sacrificed in vindication of her that was thus cruelly libelled. Shall I give currency to his malice; shall I aid and promote it by repeating it? No. And yet why not? Why should I scruple, as if afraid to challenge his falsehoods?—why should I scruple to cite them? He, this libeller, asserted—But, faugh!

This slander seemed to have been built upon some special knowledge of me; for I had often spoken with horror of those who could marry persons in a condition which obliged them to obedience—a case which had happened repeatedly within my own knowledge; and I had spoken on this ground, that the authority of a master might be *supposed* to have been interposed, whether it really were so or not, in favour of his designs; and thus a presumption, however false it might be, always remained that his wooing had been, perhaps, not the wooing of perfect freedom, so essential to the dignity of woman, and, therefore, essential to his own dignity; but that, perhaps, it had been favoured by circumstances, and by opportunities created, if it had not even been favoured by express exertions of authority. The libeller, therefore, *did* seem to have some knowledge of my peculiar opinions; yet, in other points, either from sincere ignorance or from affectation, and by way of turning aside suspicion, he certainly manifested a non-acquaintance with facts relating to me that must have been familiar enough to all within my circle.

Let me pursue the case to its last stage. The reader will say, perhaps, Why complain of a paltry journal that assuredly never made any noise? for I, the reader, never heard of it till now. No, that is very possible; for the truth is, and odd enough it seems, this malicious journal prospered so little that, positively, at the seventh No. it stopped. Laugh I did, and laugh I could not help but do, at this picture of baffled malice: writers willing and ready to fire with poisoned bullets, and yet perfectly unable to get an effective aim, from sheer want of co-operation on the part of the public.

However, the case, as it respected me, went farther than it did with respect to the public. Would it be believed that human malice, with respect to a man not even known by sight to his assailants, as was clear from one part of their personalities, finally—that is to say, months afterwards—adopted the following course:—The journal had sunk under public scorn and neglect; neglect at first, but, perhaps, scorn at the last; for, when the writers found that mere malice availed not to draw public attention, they adopted the plan of baiting their

hooks with obscenity ; and they published a paper, professing to be written by Lord Byron, called, "*My Wedding Night*," and very possible, from internal evidence, to have been really written by him ; and yet the combined forces of Byron and obscenity failed to save them—which is rather remarkable. Having sunk, one might suppose the journal was at an end, for good and evil ; and, especially, that all who had been molested by it, or held up to ridicule, might now calculate on rest.

By no means. First of all, they made inquiries about the localities of my residence, and the town nearest to my own family. Nothing was effected unless they carried the insult, addressed to my family, into the knowledge of that family and its circle. My cottage in Grasmere was just 280 miles from London, and eighteen miles from any town whatsoever. The nearest was Kendal, a place of perhaps 16,000 inhabitants, and the nearest, therefore, at which there were any newspapers printed. There were two ; one denominated the *Gazette ;* the other the *Chronicle.* The first was Tory and Conservative ; had been so from its foundation ; and was, besides, generous in its treatment of private character. My own contributions to it I will mention hereafter.[1] The *Chronicle,* on the other hand, was a violent reforming journal, and conducted in a partisan spirit. To this newspaper the article was addressed ; by this newspaper it was published ; and by this it was carried into my own "*next-door*" neighbourhood. Next-door neighbourhood ? But that surely must be the very best direction these libellers could give to their malice ; for there, at least, the falsehood of their malice must be notorious. Why, yes : and in that which *was* my neighbourhood, according to the most literal interpretation of the term, a greater favour could not have been done me, nor a more laughable humiliation for my unprovoked enemies. Commentary or refutation there needed none ; the utter falsehood of the main allegations was so obvious to every man, woman, and child, that, of necessity, it discredited even those parts which might, for anything known to my neighbours, have been true. Nay, it was the means of procuring

[1] De Quincey had himself edited this *Westmoreland Gazette* in 1819-1820.—M.

for me a generous expression of sympathy that would else have been wanting; for some gentlemen of the neighbourhood, who were but slightly known to me, put the malignant journal into the fire at a public reading-room. So far was well; but, on the other hand, in Kendal, a town nearly twenty miles distant, of necessity I was but imperfectly known; and, though there was a pretty general expression of disgust at the character of the publication and the wanton malignity which it bore upon its front,—since, true or not true, no shadow of a reason was pleaded for thus bringing forward statements expressly to injure me, or to make me unhappy,—yet there must have been many, in so large a place, who had too little interest in the question, or too limited means of inquiry, for ever ascertaining the truth. Consequently, in *their* minds, to this hour, my name, as one previously known to them, and repeatedly before the town in connexion with political or literary articles in their conservative journal, must have suffered.

But the main purpose for which I have reported the circumstances of these two cases relates to the casuistry of duelling. Casuistry, as I have already said, is the moral philosophy of *cases*—that is, of anomalous combinations of circumstances that, for any reason whatsoever, do not fall, or do not seem to fall, under the general rules of morality. As a general rule, it must, doubtless, be unlawful to attempt another man's life, or to hazard your own. Very special circumstances must concur to make out any case of exception; and even then it is evident that one of the parties must always be deeply in the wrong. But it *does* strike me that the present casuistry of society upon the question of duelling is profoundly wrong, and wrong by manifest injustice. Very little distinction is ever made, in practice, by those who apply their judgments to such cases, between the man who, upon principle, practises the most cautious self-restraint and moderation in his daily demeanour, never under any circumstances offering an insult, or any just occasion of quarrel, and resorting to duel only under the most insufferable provocation,—between this man, on the one side, and the most wanton ruffian, on the other, who makes a common

practice of playing upon other men's feelings, whether in reliance upon superior bodily strength, or upon the pacific disposition of conscientious men and fathers of families. Yet, surely, the difference between them goes the whole extent of the interval between wrong and right. Even the question "Who gave the challenge?" which *is* sometimes put, often merges virtually in the transcendent question, "Who gave the provocation?" For it is important to observe, in both the cases which I have reported, that the *onus* of offering the challenge was thrown upon the unoffending party; and thus, in a legal sense, that party is made to give the provocation who, in a moral sense, received it. But surely, if even the law makes allowances for human infirmity, when provoked beyond what it can endure, we, in our brotherly judgments upon each other, ought, *a fortiori*, to take into the equity of our considerations the amount and quality of the offence. It will be objected that the law, so far from allowing for, expressly refuses to allow for, sudden sallies of anger or explosions of vindictive fury, unless in so far as they are extempore, and before the reflecting judgment has had time to recover itself. Any indication that the party had leisure for calm review, or for cool selection of means and contrivances in executing his vindictive purposes, will be fatal to a claim of that nature. This is true; but the nature of a printed libel is continually to renew itself as an insult. The subject of it reads this libel, perhaps, in solitude; and, by a great exertion of self-command, resolves to bear it with fortitude and in silence. Some days after, in a public room, he sees strangers reading it also: he hears them scoffing and laughing loudly: in the midst of all this, he sees himself pointed out to their notice by some one of the party who happens to be acquainted with his person; and, possibly, if the libel take that particular shape which excessive malice is most likely to select, he will hear the name of some female relative,—dearer, it may be, to him, and more sacred in his ears, than all this world beside,—bandied about with scorn and mockery by those who have not the poor excuse of the original libellers, but are, in fact, adopting the second-hand malignity of others. Such cases, with respect to libels that are quickened into popularity by interesting circumstances,

or by a personal interest attached to any of the parties, or by wit, or by extraordinary malice, or by scenical circumstances, or by circumstances unusually ludicrous, are but too likely to occur ; and, with every fresh repetition, the keenness of the original provocation is renewed, and in an accelerated ratio.

Again, with reference to my own case, or to any case resembling that, let it be granted that I was immoderately and unreasonably transported by anger at the moment.—I thought so myself, after a time, when the journal which published the libel sank under the public neglect ; but this was an after consideration ; and, at the moment, how heavy an aggravation was given to the stings of the malice by the deep dejection, from embarrassed circumstances and from disordered health, which then possessed me : aggravations, perhaps, known to the libellers as encouragements for proceeding at the time, and often enough likely to exist in other men's cases. Now, in the case as it actually occurred, it so happened that the malicious writers had, by the libel, dishonoured themselves too deeply in the public opinion to venture upon coming forward, in their own persons, to avow their own work. But suppose them to have done so, as, in fact, even in this case, they might have done, had they not published their intention of driving a regular trade in libel and in slander ; suppose them insolently to beard you in public haunts, to cross your path continually when in company with the very female relative upon whom they had done their best to point the finger of public scorn ; and suppose them further, by the whole artillery of contemptuous looks, words, gestures, and unrepressed laughter, to republish, as it were, ratify, and publicly to apply, personally, their own original libel, as often as chance or as opportunity (eagerly improved) should throw you together in places of general resort ; and suppose, finally, that the central figure —nay, in their account, the very butt throughout this entire drama of malice—should chance to be an innocent, gentle-hearted, dejected, suffering woman, utterly unknown to her persecutors, and selected as their martyr merely for her relationship to yourself ; suppose her, in short, to be your wife—a lovely young woman sustained by womanly dignity, or else ready to sink into the earth with shame, under the

cruel and unmanly insults heaped upon her, and having no protector on earth but yourself: lay all this together, and then say whether, in such a case, the most philosophic or the most Christian patience might not excusably give way; whether flesh and blood could do otherwise than give way, and seek redress for the past, but, at all events, security for the future, in what, perhaps, might be the sole course open to you,—an appeal to arms.

Let it not be said that the case here proposed, by way of hypothesis, is an extreme one: for the very argument has contemplated extreme cases: since, whilst conceding that duelling is an unlawful and useless remedy for cases of ordinary wrong, where there is no malice to resist a more conciliatory mode of settlement, and where it is difficult to imagine any deliberate insult except such as is palliated by intoxication,—conceding this, I have yet supposed it possible that cases may arise, with circumstances of contumely and outrage, growing out of deep inexorable malice, which cannot be redressed, *as things now are*, without an appeal to the *voie de fait*. "But this is so barbarous an expedient in days of high civilization"! Why, yes, it labours with the semi-barbarism of chivalry: yet, on the other hand, this mention of chivalry reminds me to say that, if this practice of duelling share the blame of chivalry, one memorable praise there is, which also it may claim as common to them both. It is a praise which I have often insisted on; and the very sublime of prejudice I would challenge to deny it. Burke, in his well-known apology for chivalry, thus expresses his sense of the immeasurable benefits which it conferred upon society, as a supplementary code of law, reaching those cases which the weakness of municipal law was then unavailing to meet, and at a price so trivial in bloodshed or violence,—he calls it "the cheap defence of nations." Yes, undoubtedly; and surely the same praise belongs incontestably to the law of duelling. For one duel *in esse*, there are ten thousand, every day of our lives, amid populous cities, *in posse:* one challenge is given, a myriad are feared: one life (and usually the most worthless, by any actual good rendered to society) is sacrificed, suppose triennially, from a nation; *every* life is endangered by certain modes of behaviour. Hence, then,

and at a cost inconceivably trifling, the peace of society is maintained in cases which no law, no severity of police, ever could effectually reach. Brutal strength would reign paramount in the walks of public life, brutal intoxication would follow out its lawless impulses, were it not for the fear which now is always in the rear—the fear of being summoned to a strict summary account, liable to the most perilous consequences. This is not open to denial: the actual basis upon which reposes the security of us all, the peace of our wives and our daughters, and our own immunity from the vilest degradations under their eyes, is the necessity, known to every gentleman, of answering for his outrages in a way which strips him of all unfair advantages, except one (which is not often possessed),—which places the weak upon a level with the strong, and the quiet citizen upon a level with the military adventurer, or the ruffian of the gambling-house. The fact, I say, cannot be denied; neither can the low price be denied at which this vast result is obtained. And it is evident that, on the principle of expediency, adopted as the basis of morality by Paley, the justification of duelling is complete: for the greatest sum of immediate happiness is produced at the least possible sacrifice.[1] But there are many men of high moral principle,

[1] Neither would it be open to Paley to plead that the final or remotest consequences must be taken into the calculation, and that one of these would be the weakening of all moral sanctions, and thus, indirectly, an injury to morality which might more than compensate the immediate benefit to social peace and security. For this mode of arguing the case would bring us back to the very principle which his own implicitly, or by involution, rejects: since it would tell us to obey the principle itself without reference to the apparent consequences. By the bye, Paley has an express section of his work against the law of honour as a valid rule of action; but, as Cicero says of Epicurus, it matters little what he says; the question for us is *quam sibi convenienter*, how far consistently with himself. Now, as Sir James Mackintosh justly remarks, all that Paley says in refutation of the principle of worldly honour is hollow and unmeaning. In fact, it is merely one of the commonplaces adopted by satire, and no philosophy at all. Honour, for instance, allows you, upon paying gambling debts, to neglect or evade all others: honour, again, allows you to seduce a married woman; and he would secretly insinuate that honour *enjoins* all this: but it is evident that honour simply forbears to forbid all this; in other words, it is a very limited rule of action, not

and yet not professing to rest upon Christianity, who reject this prudential basis of ethics as the death of all morality. And these men hold that the social recognition of any one out of the three following dangerous and immoral principles, viz.—1*st*, That a man may lawfully sport with his own life; 2*dly*, That he may lawfully sport with the life of another; 3*dly*, That he may lawfully seek his redress for a social wrong by any other channel than the law tribunals of the land,—that the recognition of these, or any of them, by the jurisprudence of a nation is a mortal wound to the very key-stone upon which the whole vast arch of morality reposes. Well, in candour, I must admit that, by justifying, in courts of judicature, through the verdicts of juries, that mode of personal redress and self-vindication to heal and prevent which was one of the original motives for gathering into social communities, and setting up an empire of public law as paramount to all private exercise of power, a fatal wound is given to the sanctity of moral right, of the public conscience, and of law in its elementary field. So much I admit; but I say also that the case arises out of a great dilemma, with difficulties on both sides; and that in all *practical* applications of philosophy amongst materials so imperfect as men, just as in all attempts to realize the rigour of mathematical laws amongst early mechanics, inevitably there will arise such dilemmas and cases of opprobrium to the reflecting intellect. However, in conclusion, I shall say four things, which I request my opponent, whoever he may be, to consider; for they are things which certainly ought to have weight; and some important errors have arisen by neglecting them.

First, then, let him remember that it is the principle at stake—viz. the recognition by a legal tribunal, as lawful or innocent, of any attempt to violate the laws, or to take the law into our own hands: this it is, and the mortal taint which is thus introduced into the public morality of a Christian land, thus authentically introduced, thus sealed and countersigned by judicial authority,—the majesty of law

applying to one case of conduct in fifty. It might as well be said that Ecclesiastical Courts sanction murder because that crime lies out of their jurisdiction.

actually interfering to justify, with the solemnities of trial, a flagrant violation of law: this it is, this only, and not the amount of injury sustained by society, which gives value to the question. For, as to the injury, I have already remarked that a very trivial annual loss—one life, perhaps, upon ten millions, and that life as often as little practically valuable as any amongst us—that pays our fine or ransom in that account. And, in reality, there is one popular error made upon this subject, when the question is raised about the institution of some *Court of Honour*, or *Court of Appeal in cases of Injury to the Feelings*, under the sanction of Parliament, which satisfactorily demonstrates the trivial amount of injury sustained. It is said on such occasions that *de minimis non curat lex*,—that the mischief, in fact, is too narrow and limited for the regard of the legislature. And we may be assured that, if the evil were ever to become an extensive one, the notice of Parliament soon *would* be attracted to the subject; and hence we may derive a hint for an amended view of the policy adopted in past ages. Princes not distinguished for their religious scruples made it, in different ages and places, a capital offence to engage in a duel: whence it is inferred, falsely, that in former times a more public homage was paid to Christian principle. But the fact is that not the anti-Christian character of the offence so much as its greater frequency, and the consequent extension of a civil mischief, was the ruling consideration with the lawgiver. Among other causes for this greater prevalence of duels, was the composition of armies, more often brought together upon mercenary principles from a large variety of different nations, whose peculiar usages, points of traditional honour, and even the oddness of their several languages to the ear, formed a perpetual occasion of insult and quarrel. Fluellen's affair with Pistol, we may be sure, was no rare, but a representative, case.

Secondly, In confirmation of what I have said about duelling, as the great conductor for carrying off the excess of angry irritation in society, I will repeat what was said to me by a man of great ability and distinguished powers, as well as opportunities for observation, in reference to a provincial English town and the cabals which prevailed there. These

cabals—some political, arising out of past electioneering contests ; some municipal, arising out of the corporation disputes; some personal, arising out of family rivalships, or old traditionary disputes—had led to various feuds that vexed the peace of the town in a degree very considerably beyond the common experience of towns reaching the same magnitude. How was this accounted for? The word *tradesman* is, more than even the term *middle class*, liable to great ambiguity of meaning ; for it includes a range so large as to take in some who tread on the heels even of the highest aristocracy, and some, at the other end, who rank not at all higher than day-labourers or handicraftsmen. Now, those who ranked with gentlemen took the ordinary course of gentlemen in righting themselves under personal insults ; and the result was that, amongst *them* or *their* families, no feuds were subsisting of ancient standing. No ill blood was nursed ; no calumnies or conspicuous want of charity prevailed. Not that they often fought duels : on the contrary, a duel was a very rare event amongst the indigenous gentry of the place ; but it was sufficient to secure all the effects of duelling that it was known, with respect to this class, that in the last resort they were ready to fight. Now, on the other hand, the lowest order of tradesmen had *their* method of terminating quarrels —the old English method of their fathers—viz. by pugilistic contests. And *they* also cherished no malice against each other or amongst their families. "But," said my informant, "some of those who occupied the intermediate stations in this hierarchy of trade found themselves most awkwardly situated. So far they shared in the refinements of modern society that they disdained the coarse mode of settling quarrels by their fists. On the other hand, there was a special and peculiar reason pressing upon this class, which restrained them from aspiring to the more aristocratic modes of fighting. They were sensible of a ridicule, which everywhere attaches to many of the less elevated or liberal modes of exercising trade, in going out to fight with sword and pistol. This ridicule was sharpened and made more effectual, in *their* case, from the circumstance of the Royal Family and the Court making this particular town a frequent place of residence. Besides, apart from the ridicule, many of them

depended for a livelihood upon the patronage of royalty, or of the nobility attached to their suite; and most of these patrons would have resented their intrusion upon the privileged ground of the aristocracy in conducting disputes of honour. What was the consequence? These persons, having no natural outlet for their wounded sensibilities, being absolutely debarred from *any* mode of settling their disputes, cherished inextinguishable feuds: their quarrels in fact had no natural terminations; and the result was a spirit of malice and most unchristian want of charity, which could not hope for any final repose, except in death." Such was the report of my observing friend: the particular town may be easily guessed at; and I have little doubt that its condition continues as of old.

Thirdly, It is a very common allegation against duelling, that the ancient Romans and Grecians never practised this mode of settling disputes; and the inference is, of course, unfavourable,—not to Christianity, but to us as inconsistent disciples of our own religion; and a second inference is that the principle of personal honour, well understood, cannot require this satisfaction for its wounds. For the present I shall say nothing on the former head, but not for want of something to say. With respect to the latter, it is a profound mistake, founded on inacquaintance with the manners and the spirit of manners prevalent amongst these imperfectly civilized nations. Honour was a sense not developed in many of its modifications amongst either Greeks or Romans. Cudgelling was at one time used as the remedy in cases of outrageous libel and pasquinade. But it is a point very little to the praise of either people, that no vindictive notice was taken of any possible personalities, simply because the most hideous license had been established for centuries in tongue-license and unmanly Billingsgate. This had been promoted by the example hourly ringing in their ears of vernile scurrility. *Verna*—that is, the slave born in the family—had, each from the other, one universal and proverbial character of foul-mouthed eloquence, which, heard from infancy, could not but furnish a model almost unconsciously to those who had occasion publicly to practise vituperative rhetoric. What they remembered of this vernile licentiousness constituted

the staple of their talk in such situations. And the horrible illustrations left even by the most accomplished and literary of the Roman orators, of their shameless and womanly fluency in this dialect of unlicensed abuse, are evidences not to be resisted of such obtuseness, such coarseness of feeling, so utter a defect of all the gentlemanly sensibilities, that no man, alive to the real state of things amongst them, would ever think of pleading their example in any other view than as an object of unmitigated disgust. At all events, the long-established custom of deluging each other in the Forum, or even in the Senate, with the foulest abuse, the precedent traditionally delivered through centuries before the time of Cæsar and Cicero, had so robbed it of its sting that, as a subject of patient endurance, or an occasion for self-conquest in mastering the feelings, it had no merit at all. Anger, prompting an appeal to the cudgel, there might be; but sense of wounded honour, requiring a reparation by appeal to arms, or a washing away by blood,—no such feeling could have been subdued or overcome by a Roman, for none such existed. The feelings of wounded honour on such occasions, it will be allowed, are mere reflections (through sympathetic agencies) of feelings and opinions already existing, and generally dispersed through society. Now, in Roman society, the case was a mere subject for laughter; for there were no feelings or opinions pointing to honour, personal honour, as a principle of action, nor, consequently, to wounded honour as a subject of complaint. The Romans were not above duelling, but simply not up to that level of civilization.

Finally, With respect to the suggestion of a *Court of Honour*, much might be said that my limits will not allow; but two suggestions I will make. *First*, Recurring to a thing I have already said, I must repeat that no justice would be shown, unless (in a spirit very different from that which usually prevails in society) the weight of public indignation, and the displeasure of the court, were made to settle conspicuously upon the AGGRESSOR: not upon the challenger, who is often the party suffering under insufferable provocation (provocation which even the sternness of penal law and the holiness of Christian faith allow for); but upon the author of the original offence. *Secondly*, A much more searching

investigation must be made into the conduct of the SECONDS than is usual in the unprofessional and careless inquisitions of the public into such affairs. Often enough, the seconds hold the fate of their principals entirely in their hands; and instances are not a few, within even my limited knowledge, of cases where murder has been really committed, not by the party who fired the fatal bullet, but by him who (having it in his power to interfere without loss of honour to any party) has cruelly thought fit—(and, in some instances, apparently for no purpose but that of decorating himself with the name of an energetic man, and of producing a public "*sensation*," as it is called—a sanguinary affair)—to goad on the tremulous sensibility of a mind distracted between the sense of honour on the one hand, and the agonizing claims of a family on the other, into fatal extremities that might, by a slight concession, have been avoided. I could mention several instances; but in some of these I know the circumstances only by report. In one, however, I had my information from parties who were personally connected with the unhappy subject of the affair. The case was this:—A man of distinguished merit, whom I shall not describe more particularly, because it is no part of my purpose to recall old buried feuds, or to insinuate any *personal* blame whatsoever (my business being not with this or that man, but with a system and its principles)—this man, by a step well meant, but injudicious, and liable to a very obvious misinterpretation, as though taken in a view of self-interest, had entangled himself in a quarrel. That quarrel would have been settled amicably, or, if not amicably, at least without bloodshed, had it not been for an unlucky accident, combined with a very unwise advice. One morning, after the main dispute had been pretty well adjusted, he was standing at the fireside after breakfast, talking over the affair so far as it had already travelled, when it suddenly and most unhappily came into his head to put this general question—"Pray, does it strike you that people will be apt, on a review of this whole dispute, to think that there has been too much talking and too little doing?" His evil genius so ordered it that the man to whom he put this question was one who, having no military character to rest on, could not (or thought he could not) recommend those pacific

counsels which a truly brave man is ever ready to suggest —I put the most friendly construction upon his conduct— and his answer was this—"Why, if you insist upon my giving a faithful reply, if you *will* require me to be sincere (though I really wish you would not), in that case my duty is to tell you that the world *has* been too free in its remarks— that it has, with its usual injustice, been sneering at literary men, and *paper pellets* as the ammunition in which they trade; in short, my dear friend, the world has presumed to say that not you only, but that both parties, have shown a little of" ——"Yes; I know what you are going to say," interrupted the other, "of the *white feather*. Is it not so?"—"Exactly; you have hit the mark—that is what they say. But how unjust it is: for, says I, but yesterday, to Mr. L. M., who was going on making himself merry with the affair in a way that was perfectly scandalous—'Sir,' says I,"——But this *says I* never reached the ears of the unhappy man: he had heard enough; and, as a secondary dispute was still going on, that had grown out of the first, he seized the very first opening which offered itself for provoking the issue of a quarrel. The other party was not backward or slack in answering the appeal; and thus, in one morning, the prospect was overcast—peace was no longer possible; and a hostile meeting was arranged. Even at this meeting, much still remained in the power of the seconds: there was an absolute certainty that all fatal consequences might have been evaded, with perfect consideration for the honour of both parties. The principals must unquestionably have felt *that;* but, if the seconds would not move in that direction, of course *their* lips were sealed. A more cruel situation could not be imagined. Two persons, who never, perhaps, felt more than that fiction of enmity which belonged to the situation,—that is to say, assumed the enmity which society presumes rationally incident to a certain position,—assumed it as a point of honour, but did not heartily feel it—and, even for the slight shade of animosity which, for half an hour, they might have really felt, had thoroughly quelled it before the meeting: these two persons—under no impulses whatever, good or bad, from within, but purely in a hateful necessity of servile obedience to a command from without, prepared to perpetrate

what must, in that frame of dispassionate temper, have appeared to each a purpose of murder as regarded his antagonist, a purpose of suicide as regarded himself. Simply a word, barely a syllable, was needed from the "friends" (such friends !) of the parties, to have delivered them, with honour, from this dreadful necessity : that word was not spoken ; and, because a breath, a motion of the lips, was wanting,—because, in fact, the seconds were thoughtless and without feeling,—one of the parties has long slept in a premature grave, his early blossoms scattered to the wind, his golden promise of fruit blasted ; and the other has since lived that kind of life that, in my mind, *he* was happier who died. Something of the same kind happened in the duel between Lord Camelford and his friend Mr. Best ; something of the same kind in that between Colonel Montgomery and Captain Macnamara. In the former case, the quarrel was, at least, for a noble subject ; it concerned a woman. But, in the latter, a dog, and a thoughtless lash applied to his troublesome gambols, was the sole subject of dispute. The colonel, as is well known, a very elegant and generous young man, fell ; and Captain Macnamara had thenceforwards a worm at his heart, whose gnawings never died. He was a post-captain ; and my brother afterwards sailed with him in quality of midshipman. From him I have often heard affecting instances of the degree in which the pangs of remorse had availed to make one of the bravest men in the service a mere panic-haunted, and, in a moral sense, almost a paralytic, wreck. He that, whilst his hand was unstained with blood, would have faced an army of fiends in discharge of his duty, now fancied danger in every common rocking of a boat ; he made himself, at times, the subject of laughter at the messes of the junior and more thoughtless officers ; and his hand, whenever he had occasion to handle a spy-glass, shook (to use the common image) or, rather, shivered, like an aspen tree. Now, if a regular tribunal, authenticated by Parliament as the fountain of law, and by the Sovereign as the fountain of honour, were, under the very narrowest constitution, to apply itself merely to a review of the whole conduct pursued by the seconds, even under this restriction such a tribunal would operate with great advantage. It is needless to direct any severity to the

conduct of the principals, unless when that conduct has been outrageous or wanton in provocation: supposing any thing tolerably reasonable and natural in the growth of the quarrel, after the quarrel is once "constituted" (to borrow a term of Scotch law), the principals, as they are called, with relation to the subject of dispute, are neither principals, nor even secondaries, for the subsequent management of the dispute: they are delivered up, bound hand and foot, into the hands of their technical "friends"; passive to the law of social usage, as regards the general necessity of pursuing the dispute; passive to the directions of their seconds, as regards the particular mode of pursuing it. It is, therefore, the seconds who are the proper objects of notice for courts of honour; and the error has been, in framing the project of such a court, to imagine the inquiry too much directed upon the behaviour of those who cease to be free agents from the very moment that they become liable to any legal investigation whatever. Simply as quarrellers, the parties are no objects of question; they are not within the field of any police review; and the very first act which brings them within that field translates the responsibility (because the free agency) from themselves to their seconds. The whole *quæstio vexata*, therefore, reduces itself to these logical moments (to speak the language of mathematics): the two parties mainly concerned in the case of duelling are Society and the Seconds,—the first, by authorising such a mode of redress; the latter, by conducting it. Now, I presume, it will be thought hopeless to arraign Society at the bar of any earthly court, or apply any censure or any investigation to its mode of thinking.[1] To the *principals*, for

[1] If it be asked by what title I represent Society as authorizing (nay, of necessitating) duels, I answer, that I do not allude to any floating opinions of influential circles in society; for these are in continual conflict, and it may be difficult even to guess in which direction the preponderance would lie. I build upon two undeniable results, to be anticipated in any regular case of duel, and supported by one uniform course of precedent:—*First*, That in a civil adjudication of any such case, assuming only that it has been fairly conducted, and agreeably to the old received usages of England, no other verdict is ever given by a jury than one of acquittal. *Secondly*, That before military tribunals the result is still stronger; for the party liable to a challenge is not merely acquitted, as a matter of course, if he accepts it with any issue whatsoever, but is positively dishonoured and degraded

the reasons given, it would be unjust to apply them: and the inference is that the *seconds* are the parties to whom their main agency should be directed—as the parties in whose hands lies the practical control of the whole affair, and the whole machinery of opportunities (so easily improved by a wise humanity) for sparing bloodshed, for promoting reconciliation, for making those overtures of accommodation and generous apology which the brave are so ready to agree to in atonement for hasty words or rash movements of passion, but which it is impossible for *them* to originate: in short, for impressing the utmost possible spirit of humanizing charity and forbearance upon a practice which, after all, must for ever remain somewhat of an opprobrium to a Christian people, but which, tried by the law of worldly wisdom, is the finest bequest of chivalry, the most economic safety-valve for man's malice, that man's wit could devise, the most absolute safeguard of the weak against the brutal, and, finally (once more to borrow the words of Burke), in a sense the fullest and most practical, "the cheap defence of nations," not indeed against the hostility which besieges from *without*, but against the far more operative nuisance of bad passions that vex and molest the social intercourse of men by ineradicable impulses from within.

I may illustrate the value of one amongst the suggestions I have made, by looking back and applying it to part of my last anecdote: the case of that promising person who

(nay, even dismissed the service, virtually under colour of a request that he will sell out) if he does not. These precedents form the current law for English society, as existing amongst gentlemen. Duels, pushed *a l'outrance*, and on the savage principles adopted by a few gambling ruffians on the Continent (of which a good description is given in the novel of *The most Unfortunate Man in the World*), or by old buccaneering soldiers of Napoleon, at war with all the world, and in the desperation of cowardice demanding to fight in a saw-pit or across a table,—this sort of duels is as little recognised by the indulgence of English law as, in the other extreme, the mock duels of German Burschen are recognised by the gallantry of English society. Duels of the latter sort would be deemed beneath the dignity of judicial inquiry: duels of the other sort, beyond its indulgence. But all other duels, fairly managed in the circumstances, are undeniably privileged amongst non-military persons, and commanded to those who are military.

was cut off so prematurely for himself, and so ruinously for the happiness of the surviving antagonist. I may mention (as a fact known to me on the very best authority) that the Duke of Wellington was consulted by a person of distinction, who had been interested in the original dispute, with a view to his opinion upon the total merits of the affair, on its validity as a "fighting" quarrel, and on the behaviour of the parties to it. Upon the last question the opinion of his Grace was satisfactory. His bias, undoubtedly, if he has any, is likely to lie towards the wisdom of the peacemaker; and possibly, like many an old soldier, he may be apt to regard the right of pursuing quarrels by arms as a privilege not hastily to be extended beyond the military body. But, on the other question, as to the nature of the quarrel, the duke denied that it required a duel, or that a duel was its natural solution. And, had the duke been the mediator, it is highly probable that the unfortunate gentleman would now have been living. Certainly, the second quarrel involved far less of irritating materials than the first. It grew out of a hasty word and nothing more; such as drops from parliamentary debaters every night of any interesting discussion, — drops hastily, is as hastily recalled, or excused, perhaps, as a venial sally of passion, either by the good sense or the magnanimity of the party interested in the wrong. Indeed, by the unanimous consent of all who took notice of the affair, the seconds, or one of them at least, in this case, must be regarded as deeply responsible for the tragical issue; nor did I hear of one person who held them blameless, except that one who, of all others, might the most excusably have held them wrong in any result. But now, from such a case brought under the review of a court such as I have supposed, and improved in the way I have suggested, a lesson so memorable might have been given to the seconds, by a two years' imprisonment,—punishment light enough for the wreck of happiness which they caused,—that soon, from this single case, raised into a memorable precedent, there would have radiated an effect upon future duels for half a century to come. And no man can easily persuade me that he is in earnest about the extinction of duelling who does not lend his counten-

ance to a suggestion which would, at least, mitigate the worst evils of the practice, and would, by placing the main agents in responsibility to the court, bring the duel itself immediately under the direct control of that court; would make a legal tribunal not reviewers subsequently, but, in a manner, spectators of the scene; and would carry judicial moderation and skill into the very centre of angry passions: not, as now they act, inefficiently to review, and, by implication, sometimes to approve, their most angry ebullitions, but practically to control and repress them.

CHAPTER VII

GRADUAL ESTRANGEMENT FROM WORDSWORTH[1]

LONDON, however, great as were its attractions, did but rarely draw me away from Westmoreland. There I found more and more a shelter and an anchor for my own wishes. Originally, as I have mentioned, the motive which drew me to this county, in combination with its own exceeding beauty, had been the society of Wordsworth. But in this I committed a great oversight. Men of extraordinary genius and force of mind are far better as objects for distant admiration than as daily companions;—not that I would insinuate anything to the disadvantage of Mr. Wordsworth. What I have to say in the way of complaint shall be said openly and frankly: this is but fair; for insinuations or covert accusations always leave room for misconstruction and for large exaggeration. Mr. Wordsworth is not only a man of principle and integrity, according to the severest standard of

[1] Originally this, with the sketch of Edward Irving, was included in the article on "Walking Stewart" in *Tait's Magazine* for October 1840. See footnote, *ante*, p. 99. Having nothing to do with "Walking Stewart," but being a paper of much independent interest in relation to De Quincey himself, it is here detached. The title I give to it explains its nature and indicates its importance. It forms a very fit close to these London Reminiscences of De Quincey, inasmuch as it presents him in the mood in which he was in 1825, when, after the failure of his attempt to establish himself in London, he was preparing to return to his home in the Westmoreland Lakes. That seemed his only possible course; and the significance of the present paper lies in the fact that it informs us of one cause why his home at the Lakes had now lost much of its original charm.—M.

such a character, but he is even a man, in many respects, of amiable manners. Still there are traits of character about him, and modes of expressing them in his manners, which make a familiar or neighbourly intercourse with him painful and mortifying. Pride, in its most exalted form, he was entitled to feel; but something there was, in the occasional expression of this pride, which was difficult to bear. Upon ground where he was really strong, Wordsworth was not arrogant. In a question of criticism, he was open to any man's suggestions. But there *were* fields of thought or of observation which he seemed to think locked up and sacred to himself; and any alien entrance upon those fields he treated almost as intrusions and usurpations. One of these, and which naturally occurred the most frequently, was the whole theory of picturesque beauty, as presented to our notice at every minute by the bold mountainous scenery amongst which we lived, and as it happened to be modified by the seasons of the year, by the time of day, or by the accidents of light and shade. Now, Wordsworth and his sister really had, as I have before acknowledged, a peculiar depth of organic sensibility to the effects of form and colour; and to *them* I was willing to concede a vote, such as in ancient Rome was called "a prerogative vote," upon such questions. But, not content with this, Wordsworth virtually claimed the same precedency for all who were connected with himself, though merely by affinity, and therefore standing under no colourable presumption (as blood relations might have done) of inheriting the same constitutional gifts of organization. To everybody standing out of this sacred and privileged pale Wordsworth behaved with absolute insult in cases of this nature: he did not even appear to listen; but, as if what they said on such a theme must be childish prattle, turned away with an air of perfect indifference; began talking, perhaps, with another person on another subject; or, at all events, never noticed what we said by an apology for an answer. I, very early in our connexion, having observed this inhuman arrogance, took care never afterwards to lay myself under the possibility of such an insult. Systematically I avoided saying anything, however suddenly tempted into any expression of my feelings, upon the natural appear-

ances whether in the sky or on the earth. Thus I evaded one cause of quarrel; and so far Wordsworth was not aware of the irritation and disgust which he had founded in the minds of his friends. But there were other manifestations of the same ungenial and exclusive pride, even still more offensive and of wider application.

With other men, upon finding or thinking one's self ill-used, all one had to do was to make an explanation; and, with any reasonable grounds of complaint, or any reasonable temper to manage, one was tolerably sure of redress. Not so with Wordsworth. He had learned from Mrs. C—— a vulgar phrase for all attempts at reciprocal explanations—he called them contemptuously "*fending and proving*." And you might lay your account with being met *in limine*, and further progress barred, by a declaration to this effect—"Mr. X. Y. Z., I will have nothing to do with fending and proving." This amounted, in other words, to saying that he conceived himself to be liberated from those obligations of justice and courtesy by which other men are bound. Now, I knew myself well enough to be assured that, under such treatment, I should feel too much indignation and disgust to persevere in courting the acquaintance of a man who thus avowed his contempt for the laws of equal dealing. Redress I knew that I should never get; and, accordingly, I reasoned thus:—"I have been ill-used to a certain extent; but do I think *that* a sufficient reason for giving up all my intimacy with a man like Wordsworth? If I do *not*, let me make no complaint; for, inevitably, if I *do* make complaint, that will be the result. For, though I am able to bear the particular wrong I now complain of, yet I feel that even from Wordsworth I could not tolerate an open and contemptuous refusal of justice. The result, then, if I pursue this matter, will be to rob me of Wordsworth's acquaintance. Reparation, already necessary to my feelings, will then become necessary to my honour: I shall fail to obtain it; and then it will become my *duty* to renounce his acquaintance. I will, therefore, rest contentedly where I am."

What then were the cases of injustice which I had to complain of? Such they were as between two men could hardly have arisen; but, wherever there are women—unless

the terms on which the parties stand are most free and familiar, so that, fast as clouds arise of misunderstanding, explanations may have full leave to move concurrently, and nothing be left for either side to muse upon as wrong, or meditated insult—I hold it next to impossible that occasions should not arise in which both parties will suspect some undervaluing, or some failure in kindness or respect. I, to give one example, had, for the controller of my domestic *ménage*, a foolish, selfish, and ignorant old maid. Naturally, she ought to have been no enemy to the Wordsworths, for she had once lived as a servant with them ; and, for my service, she had been engaged, at high wages, by Miss Wordsworth herself. These motives to a special regard for the W.'s were not weighty enough to overrule her selfishness. Having unlimited power in all which regarded the pecuniary arrangements of my house, she became a person of some consideration and some power amongst her little sphere. In my absence, she took upon herself the absolute command of everything; and I could easily perceive, by different anecdotes which reached me, that she was jealous of any abridgment to her own supreme discretion, such as might naturally arise through any exercise of the friendly rights claimed in my absence by those friends who conceived themselves to have the freedom of my house, and the right to use its accommodations in any honourable way prompted by their own convenience. To my selfish housekeeper this was a dangerous privilege ; for, if it had brought no other evil with it, inevitably it would sometimes lay a restraint upon her gadding propensity, and detain her at home during months when otherwise my great distance gave her the amplest privilege of absence. In shaping remedies for this evil, which, from natural cowardice, she found it difficult to oppose in her own person, she had a ready resource in charging upon myself the measures which she found convenient. "*Master* (which was her technical designation for myself) thinks thus," or "Master left such and such directions." These were obvious fictions for a woman so selfish and mean. Any real friend of mine ought to have read, in the very situation which this woman held—in her obvious interest, connected with her temper—a suffi-

cient commentary upon the real state of things. A man more careless than myself of the petty interests concerned in such a case could not exist. And it may be supposed with what disgust and what reasonable indignation I heard of opinions uttered upon my character by those who called themselves my friends; opinions shaped to meet, not any conduct which I had ever held, or which it could be pretended that I had countenanced, but to meet the false imputations of an interested woman, who was by those imputations doing to me a far deeper injury than to those whom she merely shut out from a momentary accommodation.

But why not, upon discovering such forgeries and misrepresentations, openly and loudly denounce them for what they were? I answer that, when a man is too injuriously wounded by the words of his *soi-disant* friends, oftentimes a strong movement of pride makes it painful for him to degrade himself by explanations or justifications. Besides that, when once a false idea has prepossessed the minds of your friends, justification oftentimes becomes impossible. My servant, in such a case, would have worn the air of one who had offended me, not by a base falsehood, but by an imprudence in betraying too much of the truth; and, doubtless, when my back was turned, she would insinuate that her own interest had obliged her to put up with my disavowal of what she had done; but that, in literal truth, she had even fallen short of my directions. Others, again, would think that, though no specific directions might have been given to her, possibly she had collected my sincere wishes from words of complaint dropped casually upon former occasions. Thus, in short, partly I disdained, partly I found it impossible, to exonerate myself from those most false imputations; and I sate down half-contentedly under accusations which, in every solemnity of truth, applied less justly to myself than to any one person I knew amongst the whole circle of my acquaintance. The result was that ever after I hated the name of the woman at whose hands I had sustained this wrong, so far as such a woman could be thought worthy of hatred, and that I began to despise a little some of those who had been silly and undiscerning enough to accredit such representations; and one of them especially, who, though liberally endowed with sun-

shiny temper and sweetness of disposition, was perhaps a person weak intellectually beyond the ordinary standards of female weakness.

Hence began the waning of my friendship with the Wordsworths. But, in reality, never after the first year or so from my first introduction had I felt much possibility of drawing the bonds of friendship tight with a man of Wordsworth's nature. He seemed to me too much like his own Pedlar in the "Excursion," a man so diffused amongst innumerable objects of equal attraction that he had no cells left in his heart for strong individual attachments. I was not singular in this feeling. Professor Wilson had become estranged from him: Coleridge, one of his earliest friends, had become estranged: no one person could be deemed fervently his friend. And, with respect to Coleridge, he certainly had strong reasons to be estranged; and equally certain it is that he held a profound sense of those reasons for some years. He told me himself; and this was his peculiar inference from the case, and what he made its moral,—that married people rarely retain much capacity of friendship. Their thoughts, and cares, and anxieties, are all so much engrossed by those who naturally and rightly sit nearest to their hearts that other friends,—chosen, perhaps, originally for intellectual qualities chiefly, and seen only at casual intervals,—must, by mere human necessity, come to droop and fade in their remembrance. I see no absolute necessity for this; nor have I felt it since my own experience of the situation supposed by Coleridge has enabled me to judge. But, at all events, poor Coleridge had found it true in his own case. The rupture between him and Wordsworth, which rather healed itself by lapse of time and the burning dim of fierce recollections, than by any formal reconciliation of pardon exchanged between the parties, arose thus:—An old acquaintance of Coleridge's, happening to visit the Lakes, proposed to carry Coleridge with him to London on his return. This gentleman's wife, a lady of some distinction as to person and intellectual accomplishments, had an equal pleasure in Coleridge's society.[1] They had a place disposable in their travelling carriage; and thus

[1] The persons meant are Mr. and Mrs. Basil Montagu. See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 206.—M.

all things tallied towards the general purpose. Meantime, Wordsworth, irritated with what he viewed as excessive vanity in this gentleman (for his plan of taking Coleridge to London and making him an inmate in his house had originated in a higher purpose of weaning Coleridge from opium), ridiculed the whole scheme pointedly, as a visionary and Quixotic enterprise, such as no man of worldly experience could ever seriously countenance. The dispute—for it took that shape—tempted or drove Wordsworth into supporting his own views of Coleridge's absolute incorrigibility by all the anecdotes he could gather together illustrative of the utter and irredeemable slavery which had mastered the poor opium-martyr's will. And, most assuredly, he drew such a picture of Coleridge, and of his sensual effeminacy, as ought not to have proceeded from the hands of a friend. Notwithstanding all this, the purpose held amongst the three contracting parties: they went southwards; and, for a time, the plan was still farther realized of making Coleridge not merely a travelling companion, but also an inmate of their house. This plan, however, fell through, in consequence of incompatible habits. And, in the feud which followed, this gentleman and his wife upbraided Coleridge with the opinions held of him by his own oldest and most valued friend, William Wordsworth; and, perhaps as much to defend themselves as to annoy Coleridge, they repeated many of the arguments used by Wordsworth, and of the anecdotes by which he supported them; anecdotes which, unfortunately, vouched for their own authenticity, and were self-attested, since none but Wordsworth could have known them.

I have mentioned the kind of wrongs which first caused my personal feelings to grow colder towards the Wordsworths; and there were, afterwards, others added to these, of a nature still more irritating, because they related to more delicate topics. And, again and again, I was provoked to wonder that persons, of whom some commanded respect and attention simply as the near connexions of a great man, should so far forget the tenure on which their influence rested as to arrogate a tone of authority upon their own merits. Meantime, however much my personal feelings had altered gradually towards Wordsworth,—and more, I think, in connexion with

his pride than through any or all other causes acting jointly (insomuch that I used to say, Never describe Wordsworth as equal in pride to Lucifer: no; but, if you have occasion to write a life of Lucifer, set down that by possibility, in respect to pride, he might be some type of Wordsworth),—still, I say, my intellectual homage to Wordsworth had not been shaken. Even this, however, in a course of years, had gradually been modified. It is impossible to imagine the perplexity of mind which possessed me when I heard Wordsworth ridicule many books which I had been accustomed to admire profoundly. For some years, so equally ineradicable was either influence—my recollection, on the one hand, of the books despised, and of their power over my feelings; on the other, my blind and unquestioning veneration for Wordsworth—that I was placed in a strange sort of contradictory life; feeling that things were and were not at the same instant; believing and not believing in the same breath. And not until I had read much in German critics of what they were the first to notice,—viz. the accident of *einseitigkeit*, or *one-sidedness*, as a peculiarity not unfrequently besetting the strongest minds,—did I slowly come to the discovery that Wordsworth, beyond all men, perhaps, that have ever lived (and very likely as one condition towards the possibility of his own exceeding originality), was *einseitig* in extremity. This one-sidedness shows itself most conspicuously in his dislikings; but occasionally even in his likings. Cotton, for instance, whom, in one of his critical disquisitions, he praises so extravagantly for his fancy, has never found an admirer except in himself. And this mistake to be made in a field of such enormous opulence as is that of fancy!

But, omitting many flagrant instances, the one which most appalled myself was the following:—The "Canterbury Tales" of the Miss Lees are sufficiently well known, but not sufficiently appreciated; and one reason may be that the very inferior tales of Miss Sophia Lee are mingled with those of Miss Harriet. Two of those written by Harriet, viz. *The Landlady's Tale* and *The German's*, are absolutely unrivalled as specimens of fine narration. With respect to the latter, it is well known that Lord Byron travestied this inimitable tale into a most miserable drama; interweaving with the

dialogue of his piece every word in the original conversations, unaltered nearly, and assuredly not bettered. And the very act of borrowing a plot from a tale in which so very much depends upon the plot, and where it is of a kind that will not bend to alterations or modifications of any kind,—this in itself bespoke a poor ambition, and the servile spirit[1] of a plagiarist. This most splendid tale I put into the hands of Wordsworth ; and, for once, having, I suppose, nothing else to read, he condescended to run through it. I shall not report his opinion, which, in fact, was no opinion ; for the whole colossal exhibition of fiendish grandeur in Conrad, the fine delineation of mixed power and weakness in Siegendorf, and the exquisite relief given to the whole by the truly Shaksperian portrait of feminine innocence and nobility in Josephine, he had failed so much as to guess at. All that he wondered at was the Machiavelian insight into motives, and the play of human character ; with respect to which he said, coldly enough, that it left an uncomfortable impression of a woman as being too clever. Schiller's "Wallenstein," again, was equally unpleasing to him and unintelligible. Most people have been enraptured with the beautiful group of Max. Piccolomini and the Princess Thekla ; both because they furnish a sweet relief to the general harsh impression from so many worldly-minded, scheming, treacherous, malignant ruffians, meeting together in one camp as friends, or rivals, or betrayers ; and also on their own separate account, even apart from the relation which they bear to the whole,—for both are noble, both innocent, both young, and both unfortunate : a combination of advantages towards winning our pity which has rarely been excelled. Yet Wordsworth's sole remark to me, upon Wallenstein, was this,—that he could not comprehend Schiller's meaning or object in entailing so much unhappiness upon these young people : a remark that, to me, was incomprehensible ; for why, then, did Shakspere make Ophelia, Desdemona, Cordelia, unhappy ? Or why, to put the question more generally, did any man ever write a tragedy ?

[1] It is quite unknown to the world that Lord Byron's poem of "Lara" had already contained a gross plagiarism from Miss H. Lee. The whole outline of the story, and many remarkable phrases, are borrowed from *The German's Tale.*

Perhaps, to the public, it may illustrate Wordsworth's one-sidedness more strikingly, if I should mention my firm persuasion that he has never read one page of Sir Walter Scott's novels. Of this I am satisfied; though it is true that, latterly, feeling more indulgently to the public favourites as the public has come to appreciate himself more justly, he has spoken of these tales in a tone of assumed enthusiasm.[1] One of Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, viz. "The Italian," he had, by some strange accident, read,—read, but only to laugh at it; whilst, on the other hand, the novels of Smollett, Fielding, and Le Sage—so disgusting by their moral scenery and the whole state of vicious society in which they keep the reader moving: these, and merely for the ability of the execution, he read and remembered with extreme delight.

Without going over any other examples, it may well be understood that, by these striking instances of defective sympathy in Wordsworth with the universal feelings of his age, my intellectual, as well as my personal, regard for him, would be likely to suffer. In fact, I learned gradually that he was not only liable to human error, but that, in some points, and those of large extent, he was frailer and more infirm than most of his fellow-men. I viewed this defect, it is very true, as being the condition and the price, as it were, or ransom, of his own extraordinary power and originality; but still it raised a curtain which had hitherto sustained my idolatry. I viewed him now as a *mixed* creature, made up of special infirmity and special strength. And, finally, I now viewed him as no longer capable of an equal friendship.

With this revolution in my feelings, why did I not now leave Westmoreland? I will say: Other attractions had arisen; different in kind; equally potent in degree. These stepped in to enchain me precisely as my previous chains were unlinking themselves and leaving me in freedom.

[1] "Yarrow Revisited."

CONFESSIONS

OF AN

ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER

AUTHOR'S REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION OF 1856

PREFACE TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION OF 1822[1]

TO THE READER

I HERE present you, courteous reader, with the record of a remarkable period of my life: according to my application of it, I trust that it will prove not merely an interesting record, but, in a considerable degree, useful and instructive. In *that* hope it is that I have drawn it up; and *that* must be my apology for breaking through that delicate and honourable reserve which, for the most part, restrains us from the public exposure of our own errors and infirmities. Nothing, indeed, is more revolting to English feelings than the spec-

[1] Nothing can more strikingly illustrate De Quincey's passion for revising his old writings, his inability to keep his hands off any of them that came again under his view, than the fact that the professed reprint of this original preface prefixed by him to the enlarged edition of the "Confessions" in 1856, and there definitely under the title of "Original Preface to the Confessions," is *not* the original preface but a "doctored" modification of it. "My Original Preface, a little remodelled," is De Quincey's sly admission on the subject in the closing sentence; but the words by no means indicate the amount of the changes made in the text. Not only are there verbal alterations throughout; but there is an omission from the original matter to the extent of nearly a whole page, with an addition of wholly new matter to the extent of two pages, apart from some longish new footnotes. If this was lawful for De Quincey (which is questionable), it is not lawful for *us;* and the preface, as here reprinted, is accordingly the real "Original Preface" of 1822, and not De Quincey's version of it in 1856. Any necessary recognition of his additions in 1856 will be best made in an appended note.—M.

tacle of a human being obtruding on our notice his moral ulcers, or scars, and tearing away that "decent drapery" which time, or indulgence to human frailty, may have drawn over them: accordingly, the greater part of *our* confessions (that is, spontaneous and extra-judicial confessions) proceed from demireps, adventurers, or swindlers; and, for any such acts of gratuitous self-humiliation from those who can be supposed in sympathy with the decent and self-respecting part of society, we must look to French literature, or to that part of the German which is tainted with the spurious and defective sensibility of the French. All this I feel so forcibly, and so nervously am I alive to reproach of this tendency, that I have for many months hesitated about the propriety of allowing this, or any part of my narrative, to come before the public eye until after my death (when, for many reasons, the whole will be published): and it is not without an anxious review of the reasons for and against this step that I have, at last, concluded on taking it.

Guilt and misery shrink, by a natural instinct, from public notice: they court privacy and solitude; and, even in their choice of a grave, will sometimes sequester themselves from the general population of the churchyard, as if declining to claim fellowship with the great family of man, and wishing (in the affecting language of Mr. Wordsworth)

> ——"humbly to express
> A penitential loneliness."

It is well, upon the whole, and for the interest of us all, that it should be so; nor would I willingly, in my own person, manifest a disregard of such salutary feelings; nor in act or word do anything to weaken them. But, on the one hand, as my self-accusation does not amount to a confession of guilt, so, on the other, it is possible that, if it *did*, the benefit resulting to others, from the record of an experience purchased at so heavy a price, might compensate, by a vast overbalance, for any violence done to the feelings I have noticed, and justify a breach of the general rule. Infirmity and misery do not, of necessity, imply guilt. They approach, or recede from, the shades of that dark alliance, in proportion to the probable motives and prospects of the offender, and the

palliations, known or secret, of the offence; in proportion as the temptations to it were potent from the first, and the resistance to it, in act or in effort, was earnest to the last. For my own part, without breach of truth or modesty, I may affirm that my life has been, on the whole, the life of a philosopher: from my birth I was made an intellectual creature; and intellectual in the highest sense my pursuits and pleasures have been, even from my school-boy days. If opium-eating be a sensual pleasure, and if I am bound to confess that I have indulged in it to an excess, not yet *recorded*[1] of any other man, it is no less true that I have struggled against this fascinating enthralment with a religious zeal, and have at length accomplished what I never yet heard attributed to any other man—have untwisted, almost to its final links, the accursed chain which fettered me. Such a self-conquest may reasonably be set off in counterbalance to any kind or degree of self-indulgence. Not to insist that, in my case, the self-conquest was unquestionable, the self-indulgence open to doubts of casuistry, according as that name shall be extended to acts aiming at the bare relief of pain, or shall be restricted to such as aim at the excitement of positive pleasure.

Guilt, therefore, I do not acknowledge; and, if I did, it is possible that I might still resolve on the present act of confession, in consideration of the service which I may thereby render to the whole class of opium-eaters. But who are they? Reader, I am sorry to say, a very numerous class indeed. Of this I became convinced, some years ago, by computing, at that time, the number of those in one small class of English society (the class of men distinguished for talents, or of eminent station) who were known to me, directly or indirectly, as opium-eaters: such, for instance, as the eloquent and benevolent ——; the late Dean of ——; Lord ——; Mr. ——, the philosopher; a late under-secretary of state (who described to me the sensation which first drove him to the use of opium in the very same words as the Dean of ——, viz. "that he felt as though rats were

[1] "Not yet *recorded*," I say; for there is one celebrated man of the present day who, if all be true which is reported of him, has greatly exceeded me in quantity.

gnawing and abrading the coats of his stomach") ; Mr. ——— ; and many others, hardly less known, whom it would be tedious to mention.[1] Now, if one class, comparatively so limited, could furnish so many scores of cases (and *that* within the knowledge of one single inquirer), it was a natural inference that the entire population of England would furnish a proportionable number. The soundness of this inference, however, I doubted, until some facts became known to me, which satisfied me that it was not incorrect. I will mention two. 1. Three respectable London druggists, in widely remote quarters of London, from whom I happened lately to be purchasing small quantities of opium, assured me that the number of *amateur* opium-eaters (as I may term them) was, at this time, immense ; and that the difficulty of distinguishing these persons, to whom habit had rendered opium necessary, from such as were purchasing it with a view to suicide, occasioned them daily trouble and disputes. This evidence respected London only. But, 2 (which will possibly surprise the reader more), some years ago, on passing through Manchester, I was informed by several cotton manufacturers that their work-people were rapidly getting into the practice of opium-eating ; so much so, that on a Saturday afternoon the counters of the druggists were strewed with pills of one, two, or three grains, in preparation for the known demand of the evening. The immediate occasion of this practice was the lowness of wages, which, at that time, would not allow them to indulge in ale or spirits ; and, wages rising, it may be thought that this practice would cease : but, as I do

[1] All the blanks in this sentence were filled up by De Quincey himself in his reprint of this "Original Preface" of 1822 in the form in which he prefixed it to his Revised and Enlarged Edition of the "Confessions" in 1856. The "eloquent and benevolent ———," we there learn, was William Wilberforce ; the "late Dean of ———" was Dr. Isaac Milner, Dean of Carlisle ; "Lord ———" was the first Lord Erskine ; the "late under-secretary of state" was Mr. Addington, brother to the first Lord Sidmouth ; and "Mr. ———" was no other than Coleridge. One might have supposed the previous "Mr. ———, the philosopher," to be Coleridge ; but De Quincey professes to have forgotten in 1856 who this "Mr. ———, the philosopher," of 1822 was. See, at the end of this preface, his long double note on Dean Milner and Philosopher Dash, inserted at this point of his reprint of it in 1856.—M.

not readily believe that any man, having once tasted the divine luxuries of opium, will afterwards descend to the gross and mortal enjoyments of alcohol, I take it for granted

> "That those eat now who never ate before,
> And those who always ate now eat the more."

Indeed, the fascinating powers of opium are admitted even by medical writers, who are its greatest enemies: thus, for instance, Awsiter, apothecary to Greenwich Hospital, in his "Essay on the Effects of Opium" (published in the year 1763), when attempting to explain why Mead had not been sufficiently explicit on the properties, counter-agents, &c., of this drug, expresses himself in the following mysterious terms (*φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσι*): "Perhaps he thought the subject of too delicate a nature to be made common; and, as many people might then indiscriminately use it, it would take from that necessary fear and caution which should prevent their experiencing the extensive power of this drug; *for there are many properties in it, if universally known, that would habituate the use, and make it more in request with us than the Turks themselves;* the result of which knowledge," he adds, "must prove a general misfortune." In the necessity of this conclusion I do not altogether concur; but upon that point I shall have occasion to speak at the close of my Confessions, where I shall present the reader with the *moral* of my narrative.

APPENDED NOTE

DE QUINCEY'S ADDITIONS IN 1856 TO HIS ORIGINAL PREFACE OF 1822

I.—Additions to the Text.

These consist of the following added paragraphs at the end:—"And at this point I shall say no more than that opium, as the one sole *catholic* anodyne which hitherto has been revealed to man; secondly, as the one sole anodyne which in a vast majority of cases is *irresistible;* thirdly, as by many degrees the most potent of all known counter-agents to nervous irritation, and to the formidable curse of *tædium vitæ;* fourthly, as by possibility, under an argument undeniably plausible alleged by myself, the sole known agent—not for curing *when* formed, but for intercepting whilst likely to be formed—the great English scourge of pulmonary consumption;—I say that opium, as wearing these, or *any* of these, four beneficent characteristics—I say that any agent whatever making good such pretensions, no matter what its name, is entitled haughtily to refuse the ordinary classification and treatment which opium receives in books. I say that opium, or any agent of equal power, is entitled to assume that it was revealed to man for some higher object than that it should furnish a target for moral denunciations, ignorant where they are not hypocritical, childish where not dishonest; that it should be set up as a theatrical scarecrow for superstitious terrors, of which the *result* is oftentimes to defraud human suffering of its readiest alleviation, and of which the *purpose* is, 'Ut pueris placeant et declamatio fiant' (that they may win the applause of school-boys and furnish matter for a prize essay).

"In one sense, and remotely, all medicines and modes of medical treatment offer themselves as anodynes—that is, so far as they promise ultimately to relieve the suffering connected with physical maladies or infirmities. But we do not, in the special and ordinary sense, designate as 'anodynes' those remedies which obtain the relief from pain only as a secondary and distant effect following out from the *cure* of the ailment; but those only we call anodynes which obtain this relief

and pursue it as the *primary* and *immediate* object. If, by giving tonics to a child suffering periodic pains in the stomach, we were ultimately to banish those pains, this would not warrant us in calling such tonics by the name of anodynes: for the neutralisation of the pains would be a circuitous process of nature, and might probably require weeks for its evolution. But a true anodyne (as, for instance, half-a-dozen drops of laudanum, or a dessert-spoonful of some warm carminative mixed with brandy) will often banish the misery suffered by a child in five or six minutes. Amongst the most potent of anodynes we may rank hemlock, henbane, chloroform, and opium. But unquestionably the three first have a most narrow field of action, by comparison with opium. This, beyond all other agents made known to man, is the mightiest for its command, and for the extent of its command, over pain; and so much mightier than any other that I should think, in a Pagan land, supposing it to have been adequately made known through experimental acquaintance with its revolutionary magic, opium would have had altars and priests consecrated to its benign and tutelary powers. But this is not my own object in the present little work. Very many people have thoroughly misconstrued this object; and therefore I beg to say here, in closing my Original Preface, a little remodelled, that what I contemplated in these Confessions was to emblazon the power of opium—not over bodily disease and pain, but over the grander and more shadowy world of dreams."

II.—Added Footnotes.

These are three, as follows:—1. *Dr. Isaac Milner* (*ante*, pp. 211, 212) —"He was *nominally* known to the public as Dean of Carlisle, being colloquially always called *Dean* Milner; but virtually he was best known in his own circle as the head of Queen's College, Cambridge, where he usually resided. In common with his brother Joseph, of Hull, he was substantially a Wesleyan Methodist; and in that character, as regarded principles and the general direction of his sympathies, he pursued his deceased brother's History of the Christian Church down to the era of Luther. In these days, he would perhaps not be styled a Methodist, but simply a Low-Churchman. By whatever title described, it is meantime remarkable that a man confessedly so conscientious as Dean Milner could have reconciled to his moral views the holding of church preferment so important as this deanery in combination with the headship of an important college. One or other must have been consciously neglected. Such a record, meantime, powerfully illustrates the advances made by the Church during the last generation in practical homage to self-denying religious scruples. A very lax man would not in these days allow himself to do that which thirty years ago a severe Church-Methodist (regarded by many even as a fanatic) persisted in doing, without feeling himself called on for apology. If I have not misapprehended its tenor, this case serves most vividly to illustrate the higher standard of moral responsibility

which prevails in this current generation. We do injustice daily to our own age; which, by many a sign, palpable and secret, I feel to be, more emphatically than any since the period of Queen Elizabeth and Charles I., an intellectual, a moving, and a self-conflicting age: and inevitably, where the intellect has been preternaturally awakened, the moral sensibility must soon be commensurately stirred. The very distinctions, psychologic or metaphysical, by which, as its hinges and articulations, our modern thinking moves, proclaim the subtler character of the questions which now occupy our thoughts. Not as pedantic only, but as suspiciously unintelligible, such distinctions would, one hundred and thirty years ago, have been viewed as indictable; and perhaps (in company with Mandeville's "Political Economy") would have been seriously presented as a nuisance to the Middlesex Quarter-Sessions. Recurring, however, to Dean Milner, and the recollections of his distinguished talents amongst the contemporary circles of the first generation in this nineteenth century, I wish to mention that these talents are most feebly measured by any of his occasional writings, all drawn from him apparently by mere pressure of casual convenience. In conversation it was that he asserted *adequately* his pre-eminent place. Wordsworth, who met him often at the late Lord Lonsdale's table, spoke of him uniformly as the chief potentate colloquially of his own generation, and as the man beyond all others (Burke being departed) who did not live upon his recollections, but met the demands of every question that engaged his sympathy by spontaneous and elastic movements of novel and original thought. As an opium-eater, Dean Milner was understood to be a strenuous wrestler with the physical necessity that coerced him into this habit. From several quarters I have heard that his daily *ration* was 34 grains (or about 850 drops of laudanum), divided into four portions, and administered to him at regular intervals of six hours by a confidential valet."

2. *Philosopher Dash, and the other blanks in the list of distinguished opium-eaters* (*ante*, pp. 211, 212):—"Who is Mr. Dash, the philosopher? Really I have forgot. Not through any fault of my own, but on the motion of some absurd coward having a voice potential at the press, all the names were struck out behind my back in the first edition of the book, thirty-five years ago. I was not consulted, and did not discover the absurd blanks until months afterwards, when I was taunted with them very reasonably by a caustic reviewer. Nothing could have a more ludicrous effect than this appeal to shadows—to my Lord Dash, to Dean Dash, and to Mr. Secretary Dash. Very naturally it thus happened to Mr. Philosopher Dash that his burning light, alas! was extinguished irrecoverably in the general *mêlée*. Meantime, there was no excuse whatever for this absurd interference, such as might have been alleged in any personality capable of causing pain to any one person concerned. All the cases, except, perhaps, that of Wilberforce (about which I have at this moment some slight lingering doubts), were matters of notoriety to large circles of friends. It is due to Mr. John Taylor, the accomplished publisher of the work, that I should acquit *him* of any share in this absurdity."

3. *Note to last sentence but two in the added paragraphs of text:*—"'*Adequately made known*':—Precisely this, however, was impossible. No feature of ancient Pagan life has more entirely escaped notice than the extreme rarity, costliness, and circuitous accessibility of the more powerful drugs, especially of mineral drugs, and of drugs requiring elaborate preparation, or requiring much manufacturing skill. When the process of obtaining any manufactured drug was slow and intricate, it could most rarely be called for. And, rarely called for, why should it be produced? By looking into the history and times of Herod the Great, as reported by Josephus, the reader will gain some notion of the mystery and the suspicion surrounding all attempts at importing such drugs as could be applied to murderous purposes,—consequently of the delay, the difficulty, and the peril in forming any familiar acquaintance with opium."

PREFATORY NOTICE TO THE NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION OF 1856

When it had been settled that, in the general series of these republications, the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" should occupy the Fifth Volume,[1] I resolved to avail myself most carefully of the opening thus made for a revision of the entire work. By accident, a considerable part of the Confessions (all, in short, except the Dreams) had originally been written hastily; and, from various causes, had never received any strict revision, or, *virtually*, so much as an ordinary verbal correction. But a great deal more was wanted than this. The main narrative should naturally have moved through a succession of secondary incidents; and, with leisure for recalling these, it might have been greatly inspirited. Wanting all opportunity for such advantages, this narrative had been needlessly impoverished. And thus it had happened that not so properly correction and retrenchment were called for as integration of what had been left imperfect, or amplification of what, from the first, had been insufficiently expanded.

With these views, it would not have been difficult (though toilsome) to re-cast the little work in a better mould; and the result might, in all reason, count upon the approbation at least of its own former readers. Compared with its own former self, the book must certainly tend, by its very

[1] This was the place of the new edition of the "Confessions" in De Quincey's own Edinburgh issue of his collected writings in fourteen volumes.—M.

principle of change, whatever should be the *execution* of that change, to become better: and in my own opinion, after all drawbacks and allowances for the faulty exemplification of a good principle, it *is* better. This should be a matter of mere logical or inferential necessity; since, in pure addition to everything previously approved, there would now be a clear surplus of extra matter—all that might be good in the old work, and a great deal beside that was new. Meantime this improvement has been won at a price of labour and suffering that, if they could be truly stated, would seem incredible. A nervous malady, of very peculiar character, which has attacked me intermittingly for the last eleven years, came on in May last, almost concurrently with the commencement of this revision; and so obstinately has this malady pursued its noiseless, and what I may call subterraneous, siege, since none of the symptoms are externally manifested, that, although pretty nearly dedicating myself to this one solitary labour, and not intermitting or relaxing it for a single day, I have yet spent, within a very few days, six calendar months upon the re-cast of this one small volume.

The consequences have been distressing to all concerned. The press has groaned under the chronic visitation; the compositors shudder at the sight of my handwriting, though not objectionable on the score of legibility; and I have much reason to fear that, on days when the pressure of my complaint has been heaviest, I may have so far given way to it as to have suffered greatly in clearness of critical vision. Sometimes I may have overlooked blunders, mis-statements, or repetitions, implicit or even express. But more often I may have failed to appreciate the true effects from faulty management of style and its colourings. Sometimes, for instance, a heavy or too intricate arrangement of sentences may have defeated the tendency of what, under its natural presentation, would have been affecting; or it is possible enough that, by unseasonable levity at other times, I may have repelled the sympathy of my readers—all or some. Endless are the openings for such kinds of mistake—that is, of mistakes not fully seen *as* such. But, even in a case of unequivocal mistake, seen and acknowledged, yet, when it is open to remedy only through a sudden and energetic act

then or never,—the press being for twenty minutes, suppose, free to receive an alteration, but beyond that time closed and sealed inexorably: such being supposed the circumstances, the humane reader will allow for the infirmity which even wilfully and consciously surrenders itself to the error, acquiescing in it deliberately rather than face the cruel exertion of correcting it most elaborately at a moment of sickening misery, and with the prevision that the main correction must draw after it half-a-dozen others for the sake of decent consistency. I am not speaking under any present consciousness of such a case existing against myself: I believe there *is* none such. But I choose to suppose an extreme case of even conscious error, in order that venial cases of oversight may, under shelter of such an *outside* license, find toleration from a liberal critic. To fight up against the wearing siege of an abiding sickness imposes a fiery combat. I attempt no description of this combat, knowing the unintelligibility and the repulsiveness of all attempts to communicate the incommunicable. But the generous reader will not, for that forbearance on my part, the less readily show his indulgence, if a case should (unexpectedly to myself) arise for claiming it.

I have thus made the reader acquainted with one out of two cross currents that tended to thwart my efforts for improving this little work. There was, meantime, another, less open to remedy from my own uttermost efforts. All along I had relied upon a crowning grace, which I had reserved for the final pages of this volume, in a succession of some twenty or twenty-five dreams and noon-day visions, which had arisen under the latter stages of opium influence. These have disappeared: some under circumstances which allow me a reasonable prospect of recovering them; some unaccountably; and some dishonourably. Five or six, I believe, were burned in a sudden conflagration which arose from the spark of a candle falling unobserved amongst a very large pile of papers in a bedroom, when I was alone and reading. Falling not *on*, but *amongst* and *within* the papers, the fire would soon have been ahead of conflict; and, by communicating with the slight woodwork and draperies of the bed, it would have immediately enveloped the laths of a ceiling overhead, and thus the house, far from fire-engines, would have been burned

down in half-an-hour. My attention was first drawn by a sudden light upon my book: and the whole difference between a total destruction of the premises and a trivial loss (from books charred) of five guineas was due to a large Spanish cloak. This, thrown over, and then drawn down tightly, by the aid of one sole person, somewhat agitated, but retaining her presence of mind, effectually extinguished the fire. Amongst the papers burned partially, but not so burned as to be absolutely irretrievable, was the "Daughter of Lebanon"; and this I have printed, and have intentionally placed it at the end, as appropriately closing a record in which the case of poor Ann the Outcast formed not only the most memorable and the most suggestively pathetic incident, but also *that* which, more than any other, coloured—or (more truly I should say) shaped, moulded and remoulded, composed and decomposed—the great body of opium dreams. The search after the lost features of Ann, which I spoke of as pursued in the crowds of London, was in a more proper sense pursued through many a year in dreams. The general idea of a search and a chase reproduced itself in many shapes. The person, the rank, the age, the scenical position, all varied themselves for ever; but the same leading traits more or less faintly remained of a lost Pariah woman, and of some shadowy malice which withdrew her, or attempted to withdraw her, from restoration and from hope. Such is the explanation which I offer why that particular addition which some of my friends had been authorised to look for has not in the main been given, nor for the present *could* be given; and, secondly, why that part which *is* given has been placed in the conspicuous situation (as a closing passage) which it now occupies.

November 1856.

CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER

PART I

INTRODUCTORY NARRATION[1]

I HAVE often been asked how it was, and through what series of steps, that I became an opium-eater. Was it gradually, tentatively, mistrustingly, as one goes down a shelving beach into a deepening sea, and with a knowledge from the first of the dangers lying on that path ; half-courting those dangers, in fact, whilst seeming to defy them ? Or was it, secondly, in pure ignorance of such dangers, under the misleadings of mercenary fraud ? since oftentimes lozenges for the relief of pulmonary affections found their efficacy upon the opium which they contain, — upon this, and this only, though clamorously disavowing so suspicious an alliance,—and under such treacherous disguises multitudes are seduced into a dependency which they had not foreseen upon a drug which they had not known ; not known even by name or by sight : and thus the case is not rare that the chain of abject slavery is first detected when it has inextricably wound

[1] The sub-title "Introductory Narration" is not prefixed in De Quincey's own revised and enlarged edition ; but, as he adopts the phrase himself when describing this portion of his *Confessions*, it is inserted here. In the original edition of 1822 "Preliminary Confessions" was the title used for the corresponding portion of the book ; and the present "Introductory Narration" is, in fact, a vast expansion of the matter of those "Preliminary Confessions."—M.

itself about the constitutional system. Thirdly, and lastly, was it (*Yes*, by passionate anticipation, I answer, before the question is finished)—was it on a sudden, overmastering impulse derived from bodily anguish? Loudly I repeat, *Yes;* loudly and indignantly—as in answer to a wilful calumny. Simply as an anodyne it was, under the mere coercion of pain the severest, that I first resorted to opium; and precisely that same torment it is, or some variety of that torment, which drives most people to make acquaintance with that same insidious remedy. Such was the fact; such by accident. Meantime, without blame it might have been otherwise. If in early days I had fully understood the subtle powers lodged in this mighty drug (when judiciously regulated), (1) to tranquillise all irritations of the nervous system; (2) to stimulate the capacities of enjoyment; and (3) under any call for extraordinary exertion (such as all men meet at times) to sustain through twenty-four consecutive hours the else drooping animal energies—most certainly, knowing or suspecting all this, I should have inaugurated my opium career in the character of one seeking *extra* power and enjoyment, rather than of one shrinking from *extra* torment. And why not? If *that* argued any fault, is it not a fault that most of us commit every day with regard to alcohol? Are we entitled to use *that* only as a medicine? Is wine unlawful, except as an anodyne? I hope not: else I shall be obliged to counterfeit and to plead some anomalous *tic* in my little finger; and thus gradually, as in any Ovidian metamorphosis, I, that am at present a truth-loving man, shall change by daily inches into a dissembler. No: the whole race of man proclaim it lawful to drink wine without pleading a medical certificate as a qualification. That same license extends itself therefore to the use of opium; what a man may lawfully seek in wine surely he may lawfully find in opium; and much more so in those many cases (of which mine happens to be one) where opium deranges the animal economy less by a great deal than an equivalent quantity of alcohol. Coleridge, therefore, was doubly in error when he allowed himself to aim most unfriendly blows at my supposed voluptuousness in the use of opium; in error as to a principle, and in error as to a fact. A letter of his, which I will hope that

he did not design to have published, but which, however, *has* been published, points the attention of his correspondent to a broad distinction separating my case as an opium-eater from his own.[1] He, it seems, had fallen excusably (because unavoidably) into this habit of eating opium—as the one sole therapeutic resource available against his particular malady; but I, wretch that I am, being so notoriously charmed by fairies against pain, must have resorted to opium in the abominable character of an adventurous voluptuary, angling in all streams for variety of pleasures. Coleridge is wrong to the whole extent of what was possible; wrong in his fact, wrong in his doctrine; in his little fact, and his big doctrine. I did not do the thing which he charges upon me; and, if I *had* done it, this would not convict me as a citizen of Sybaris or Daphne. There never was a distinction more groundless and visionary than that which it has pleased him to draw between my motives and his own; nor could Coleridge have possibly owed this mis-statement to any false information; since no man surely, on a question of my own private experience, could have pretended to be better informed than myself. Or, if there really is such a person, perhaps he will not think it too much trouble to re-write these Confessions from first to last, correcting their innumerable faults; and, as it happens that some parts of the unpublished sections for the present are missing, would he kindly restore them—brightening the colours that may have faded, rekindling the

[1] The letter was printed in Gillman's *Life of Coleridge*, published in 1838; and the passage in it principally referred to was this—"Nor had I at any time taken the flattering poison as a stimulus, or for any craving after pleasurable sensations. I needed none; and oh! with what unutterable sorrow did I read the *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, in which the writer, with morbid vanity, makes a boast of what was my misfortune; for he had been faithfully, and with an agony of zeal, warned of the gulf, and yet willingly struck into the current. . . . Oh! may He, the God to whom I look for mercy through Christ, show mercy on the author of the *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, if, as I have strong reason to believe, his book has been the occasion of seducing others into the withering vice through wantonness. From this aggravation I have, I humbly trust, been free. . . . Even to the author of that work I pleaded with flowing tears, and with an agony of forewarning. He utterly denied it; but I fear that I had then even to *deter* perhaps, not to forewarn." The strength of these words may partly account for the strength of De Quincey's language in the comment on them which follows.—M.

inspiration that may have drooped; filling up all those chasms which else are likely to remain as permanent disfigurations of my little work? Meantime the reader who takes any interest in such a question will find that I myself (upon such a theme not simply the best, but surely the sole authority) have, without a shadow of variation, always given a different account of the matter. Most truly I have told the reader that not any search after pleasure, but mere extremity of pain from rheumatic toothache—this and nothing else it was that first drove me into the use of opium. Coleridge's bodily affliction was simple rheumatism. Mine, which intermittingly raged for ten years, was rheumatism in the face combined with toothache. This I had inherited from my father; or inherited (I should rather say) from my own desperate ignorance; since a trifling dose of colocynth, or of any similar medicine, taken three times a-week, would more certainly than opium have delivered me from that terrific curse.[1] In this ignorance, however, which misled me into making war upon toothache when ripened and manifesting itself in effects of pain, rather than upon its germs and gathering causes, I did but follow the rest of the world. To

[1] "*That terrific curse*":—Two things blunt the general sense of horror which would else connect itself with toothache: viz., first, its enormous diffusion; hardly a household in Europe being clear of it, each in turn having some one chamber intermittingly echoing the groans extorted by this cruel torture. There—viz. in its ubiquity—lies one cause of its slight valuation. A second cause is found in its immunity from danger. This latter ground of undervaluation is noticed in a saying ascribed (but on what authority I know not) to Sir Philip Sidney—viz. that, supposing toothache liable in ever so small a proportion of its cases to a fatal issue, it would be generally ranked as the most dreadful amongst human maladies; whereas the certainty that it will in no extremity lead to death, and the knowledge that in the very midst of its storms sudden changes may be looked for bringing long halcyon calms, have an unfair effect in lowering the appreciation of this malady considered as a trial of fortitude and patience. No stronger expression of its intensity and scorching fierceness can be imagined than this fact—that, within my private knowledge, two persons who had suffered alike under toothache and cancer have pronounced the former to be, on the scale of torture, by many degrees the worse. In both, there are *at times* what surgeons call "lancinating" pangs—keen, glancing, arrowy radiations of anguish; and upon these the basis of comparison was rested—paroxysm against paroxysm—with the result that I have stated.

intercept the evil whilst yet in elementary stages of formation was the true policy ; whereas I in my blindness sought only for some mitigation to the evil when already formed, and past all reach of interception. In this stage of the suffering, formed and perfect, I was thrown passively upon chance advice, and therefore, by a natural consequence, upon opium —that being the one sole anodyne that is almost notoriously such, and which in that great function is universally appreciated.

Coleridge, therefore, and myself, as regards our baptismal initiation into the use of that mighty drug, occupy the very same position. We are embarked in the self-same boat ; nor is it within the compass even of angelic hair-splitting to show that the dark shadow thrown by our several trespasses in this field, mine and his, had by so much as a pin's point any assignable difference. Trespass against trespass (if any trespass there were)—shadow against shadow (if any shadow were really thrown by this trespass over the snowy disk of pure ascetic morality)—in any case, that act in either of us would read into the same meaning, would count up as a debt into the same value, would measure as a delinquency into the same burden of responsibility. And vainly, indeed, does Coleridge attempt to differentiate two cases which ran into absolute identity, differing only as rheumatism differs from toothache. Amongst the admirers of Coleridge, I at all times stood in the foremost rank ; and the more was my astonishment at being summoned so often to witness his carelessness in the management of controversial questions, and his demoniac inaccuracy in the statement of facts. The more also was my sense of Coleridge's wanton injustice in relation to myself individually. Coleridge's gross misstatement of facts, in regard to our several opium experiences, had its origin, sometimes in flighty reading, sometimes in partial and incoherent reading, sometimes in subsequent forgetfulness ; and any one of these lax habits (it will occur to the reader) is a venial infirmity. Certainly it is ; but surely *not* venial when it is allowed to operate disadvantageously upon the character for self-control of a brother, who had never spoken of *him* but in the spirit of enthusiastic admiration ; of that admiration which his exquisite works so

amply challenge. Imagine the case that I really *had* done something wrong, still it would have been ungenerous—me it would have saddened, I confess, to see Coleridge rushing forward with a public denunciation of my fault:—"Know all men by these presents that I, S. T. C., *a noticeable man with large grey eyes*,[1] am a licensed opium-eater, whereas this other man is a buccaneer, a pirate, a flibustier,[2] and can have none but a forged licence in his disreputable pocket. In the name of Virtue, arrest him!" But the truth is, that inaccuracy as to facts and citations from books was in Coleridge a mere necessity of nature. Not three days ago, in reading a short comment of the late Archdeacon Hare ("Guesses at Truth") upon a bold speculation of Coleridge's (utterly baseless) with respect to the machinery of Etonian Latin verses, I found my old feelings upon this subject refreshed by an instance that is irresistibly comic, since everything that Coleridge had relied upon as a citation from a book in support of his own hypothesis turns out to be a pure fabrication of his own dreams; though, doubtless (which indeed it is that constitutes the characteristic interest of the case), without a suspicion on his part of his own furious romancing. The archdeacon's good-natured smile upon that Etonian case naturally reminded me of the case now before us, with regard to the history of our separate careers as opium-eaters. Upon which case I need say no more, as by this time the reader is aware that Coleridge's entire statement upon that subject is perfect moonshine, and, like the sculptured imagery of the pendulous lamp in "Christabel,"

> "All carvèd from the carver's brain."

This case, therefore, might now be counted on as disposed of;

[1] See Wordsworth's exquisite picture of S. T. C. and himself as occasional denizens in the "Castle of Indolence."

[2] This word—in common use, and so spelled as I spell it, amongst the grand old French and English buccaneers contemporary with our own admirable Dampier, at the close of the seventeenth century—has recently been revived in the journals of the United States, with a view to the special case of Cuba, but (for what reason I know not) is now written always as *filli*busters. Meantime, written in whatsoever way, it is understood to be a Franco-Spanish corruption of the English word *freebooter*.

and what sport it could yield might reasonably be thought exhausted. Meantime, on consideration, another and much deeper oversight of Coleridge's becomes apparent; and, as this connects itself with an aspect of the case that furnishes the foundation to the whole of these ensuing Confessions, it cannot altogether be neglected. Any attentive reader, after a few moments' reflection, will perceive that, whatever may have been the casual *occasion* of mine or Coleridge's opium-eating, this could not have been the permanent *ground* of opium-eating; because neither rheumatism nor toothache is any *abiding* affection of the system. Both are intermitting maladies, and not at all capable of accounting for a *permanent* habit of opium-eating. Some months are requisite to found *that*. Making allowance for constitutional differences, I should say that *in less than* 120 *days* no habit of opium-eating could be formed strong enough to call for any extraordinary self-conquest in renouncing it, and even suddenly renouncing it. On Saturday you are an opium-eater, on Sunday no longer such. What then was it, after all, that made Coleridge a slave to opium, and a slave that could not break his chain? He fancies, in his headlong carelessness, that he has accounted for this habit and this slavery; and in the meantime he has accounted for nothing at all about which any question has arisen. Rheumatism, he says, drove him to opium. Very well; but with proper medical treatment the rheumatism would soon have ceased; or even without medical treatment, under the ordinary oscillations of natural causes. And when the pain ceased, then the opium should have ceased. Why did it not? Because Coleridge had come to taste the genial pleasure of opium; and thus the very impeachment which he fancied himself in some mysterious way to have evaded recoils upon him in undiminished force. The rheumatic attack would have retired before the habit could have had time to form itself. Or suppose that I underrate the strength of the possible habit—this tells equally in *my* favour; and Coleridge was not entitled to forget in *my* case a plea remembered in his own. It is really memorable in the annals of human self-deceptions that Coleridge could have held such language in the face of such facts. I, boasting not at all of my self-

conquests, and owning no moral argument against the free use of opium, nevertheless on mere *prudential* motives break through the vassalage more than once, and by efforts which I have recorded as modes of transcendent suffering. Coleridge, professing to believe (without reason assigned) that opium-eating is criminal, and in some mysterious sense more criminal than wine-drinking or porter-drinking,—having, therefore, the strongest *moral* motive for abstaining from it,—yet suffers himself to fall into a captivity to this same wicked opium, deadlier than was ever heard of, and under no coercion whatever that he has anywhere explained to us. A slave he was to this potent drug not less abject than Caliban to Prospero—his detested and yet despotic master. Like Caliban, he frets his very heart-strings against the rivets of his chain. Still, at intervals through the gloomy vigils of his prison, you hear muttered growls of impotent mutineering swelling upon the breeze:

"Irasque leonum
Vincla recusantum"——

recusantum, it is true, still refusing yet still accepting, protesting for ever against the fierce, overmastering curb-chain, yet for ever submitting to receive it into the mouth. It is notorious that in Bristol (to *that* I can speak myself, but probably in many other places) he went so far as to hire men—porters, hackney-coachmen, and others—to oppose by force his entrance into any druggist's shop. But, as the authority for stopping him was derived simply from himself, naturally these poor men found themselves in a metaphysical fix, not provided for even by Thomas Aquinas or by the prince of Jesuitical casuists. And in this excruciating dilemma would occur such scenes as the following:—

"Oh, sir," would plead the suppliant porter—suppliant, yet semi-imperative (for equally if he *did*, and if he did *not*, show fight, the poor man's daily 5s. seemed endangered)—"really you must not; consider, sir, your wife and——"

Transcendental Philosopher.—"Wife! what wife? I have no wife."[1]

[1] *Vide* "Othello."

Porter.—"But, really now, you must not, sir. Didn't you say no longer ago than yesterday——"

Transcend. Philos.—"Pooh, pooh! yesterday is a long time ago. Are you aware, my man, that people are known to have dropped down dead for timely want of opium?"

Porter.—"Ay, but you tell't me not to hearken——"

Transcend. Philos.—"Oh, nonsense! An emergency, a shocking emergency, has arisen—quite unlooked for. No matter what I told you in times long past. That which I *now* tell you is—that, if you don't remove that arm of yours from the doorway of this most respectable druggist, I shall have a good ground of action against you for assault and battery."

Am I the man to reproach Coleridge with this vassalage to opium? Heaven forbid! Having groaned myself under that yoke, I pity, and blame him not. But, undeniably, such a vassalage must have been created wilfully and consciously by his own craving after genial stimulation; a thing which I do not blame, but Coleridge *did*. For my own part, duly as the torment relaxed in relief of which I had resorted to opium, I laid aside the opium, not under any meritorious effort of self-conquest; nothing of that sort do I pretend to; but simply on a prudential instinct warning me not to trifle with an engine so awful of consolation and support, nor to waste upon a momentary uneasiness what might eventually prove, in the midst of all-shattering hurricanes, the great elixir of resurrection. What was it that did in reality make me an opium-eater? That affection which finally drove me into the *habitual* use of opium, what was it? Pain was it? No, but misery. Casual overcasting of sunshine was it? No, but blank desolation. Gloom was it that might have departed? No, but settled and abiding darkness—

"Total eclipse,
Without all hope of day!"[1]

Yet whence derived? Caused by what? Caused, as I might truly plead, by youthful distresses in London, were it not that these distresses were due, in their ultimate origin, to my own unpardonable folly; and to that folly I trace

[1] "Samson Agonistes."

many ruins. Oh, spirit of merciful interpretation, angel of forgiveness to youth and its aberrations, that hearkenest for ever as if to some sweet choir of far-off female intercessions! will ye, choir that intercede—wilt thou, angel that forgivest—join together, and charm away that mighty phantom, born amidst the gathering mists of remorse, which strides after me in pursuit from forgotten days—towering for ever into proportions more and more colossal, overhanging and overshadowing my head as if close behind, yet dating its nativity from hours that are fled by more than half-a-century? Oh heavens! that it should be possible for a child not seventeen years old, by a momentary blindness, by listening to a false, false whisper from his own bewildered heart, by one erring step, by a motion this way or that, to change the currents of his destiny, to poison the fountains of his peace, and in the twinkling of an eye to lay the foundations of a life-long repentance! Yet, alas! I must abide by the realities of the case. And one thing is clear,—that, amidst such bitter self-reproaches as are now extorted from me by the anguish of my recollections, it cannot be with any purpose of weaving plausible excuses, or of evading blame, that I trace the origin of my confirmed opium-eating to a necessity growing out of my early sufferings in the streets of London. Because, though true it is that the re-agency of these London sufferings did in after years *enforce* the use of opium, equally it is true that the sufferings themselves grew out of my own folly. What really calls for excuse is not the recourse to opium, when opium had become the one sole remedy available for the malady, but those follies which had themselves produced that malady.

I, for my part, after I had become a regular opium-eater, and from mismanagement had fallen into miserable excesses in the use of opium, did nevertheless, four several times, contend successfully against the dominion of this drug; did four several times renounce it; renounced it for long intervals; and finally resumed it upon the warrant of my enlightened and deliberate judgment, as being of two evils by very much the least. In this I acknowledge nothing that calls for excuse. I repeat again and again that not the application of opium, with its deep tranquillising powers to

the mitigation of evils, bequeathed by my London hardships, is what reasonably calls for sorrow, but that extravagance of childish folly which precipitated me into scenes naturally producing such hardships.

These scenes I am now called upon to retrace. Possibly they are sufficiently interesting to merit, even on their own account, some short record; but at present, and at this point, they have become indispensable as a key to the proper understanding of all which follows. For in these incidents of my early life is found the entire substratum, together with the secret and underlying motive,[1] of those pompous dreams and dream-sceneries which were in reality the true objects—first and last—contemplated in these Confessions.

My father died when I was in my seventh year, leaving six children, including myself (viz. four sons and two daughters), to the care of four guardians, and of our mother, who was invested with the legal authority of a guardian. This word "*guardian*" kindles a fiery thrilling in my nerves; so much was that special power of guardianship, as wielded by one of the four, concerned in the sole capital error of my boyhood. To this error my own folly would hardly have been equal, unless by concurrence with the obstinacy of others. From the bitter remembrance of this error in myself—of this obstinacy in my hostile guardian—suffer me to draw the privilege of making a moment's pause upon this subject of legal guardianship.

There is not (I believe) in human society, under whatever form of civilisation, any trust or delegated duty which has more often been negligently or even perfidiously administered. In the days of classical Greece and Rome, my own private impression, founded on the collation of many incidental notices, is—that this, beyond all other forms of domestic authority, furnished to wholesale rapine and peculation their very amplest arena. The relation of father and son, as was that of *patron* and *client*, was generally, in the practice of life, cherished with religious fidelity: whereas

[1] "*Motive*":—The word *motive* is here used in the sense attached by artists and connoisseurs to the technical word *motivo*, applied to pictures, or to the separate movements in a musical theme.

the solemn duties of the *tutor* (*i.e.*, the *guardian*) to his ward, which had their very root and origin in the tenderest adjurations of a dying friend, though subsequently refreshed by the hourly spectacle of helpless orphanage playing round the margins of pitfalls hidden by flowers, spoke but seldom to the sensibilities of a Roman through any language of oracular power. Few indeed, if any, were the obligations in a proper sense *moral* which pressed upon the Roman. The main fountains of moral obligation had in Rome, by law or by custom, been thoroughly poisoned. Marriage had corrupted itself through the facility of divorce, and through the consequences of that facility (viz., levity in choosing, and fickleness in adhering to the choice), into so exquisite a traffic of selfishness that it could not yield so much as a phantom model of sanctity. The relation of husband and wife had, for all moral impressions, perished amongst the Romans. The relation of father and child had all its capacities of holy tenderness crushed out of it under the fierce pressure of penal and vindictive enforcements. The duties of the client to his patron stood upon no basis of simple gratitude or simple fidelity (corresponding to the feudal *fealty*), but upon a basis of prudential terror; terror from positive law, or from social opinion. From the first intermeddling of law with the movement of the higher moral affections, there is an end to freedom in the act—to purity in the motive—to dignity in the personal relation. Accordingly, in the France of the pre-revolutionary period, and in the China of all periods, it has been with baleful effects to the national morals that positive law has come in aid of the paternal rights. And in the Rome of ancient history it may be said that this one original and rudimental wrong done to the holy freedom of human affections had the effect of extinguishing thenceforward all *conscientious* movement in whatever direction. And thus, amongst a people naturally more highly principled than the Greeks, if you except ebullitions of public spirit and patriotism (too often of mere ignoble nationality), no class of actions stood upon any higher basis of motive than (1) legal ordinance, (2) superstitious fear, or (3) servile compliance with the insolent exactions of popular usage. Strange, therefore, it would have been if the

tutor of obscure orphans, with *extra* temptations, and *extra* facilities for indulging them, should have shown himself more faithful to his trust than the governor of provinces—prætorian or proconsular. Yet who more treacherous and rapacious than he? Rarest of men was the upright governor that accepted no bribes from the criminal, and extorted no ransoms from the timid. He nevertheless, as a *public* trustee, was watched by the jealousy of political competitors, and had by possibility a solemn audit to face in the senate or in the forum; perhaps in both. But the tutor, who administered a private trust on behalf of orphans, might count on the certainty that no public attention could ever be attracted to concerns so obscure, and politically so uninteresting. Reasonably, therefore, and by all analogy, a Roman must have regarded the ordinary domestic *tutor* as almost inevitably a secret delinquent using the opportunities and privileges of his office as mere instruments for working spoliation and ruin upon the inheritance confided to his care. This deadly and besetting evil of Pagan days must have deepened a hundredfold the glooms overhanging the death-beds of parents. Too often the dying father could not fail to read in his own life-long experience that, whilst seeking special protection for his children, he might himself be introducing amongst them a separate and imminent danger. Leaving behind him a little household of infants, a little fleet (as it might be represented) of fairy pinnaces, just raising their anchors in preparation for crossing the mighty deeps of life, he made signals for "convoy." Some one or two (at best imperfectly known to him), amongst those who traversed the same seas, he accepted in that character; but doubtfully, sorrowfully, fearfully; and, at the very moment when the faces of his children were disappearing amongst the vapours of death, the miserable thought would cross his prophetic soul that too probably this pretended "convoy," under the strong temptations of the case, might eventually become pirates; robbers, at the least; and by possibility wilful misleaders to the inexperience of his children.

From this dreadful aggravation of the anguish at any rate besetting the death-beds of parents summoned away from a group of infant children, there has been a mighty deliverance

wrought in a course of centuries by the vast diffusion of Christianity. In these days, wheresoever an atmosphere is breathed that has been purified by Christian charities and Christian principles, this household pestilence has been continually dwindling: and in the England of this generation there is no class of peculation which we so seldom hear of: one proof of which is found in the indifference with which most of us regard the absolute security offered to children by the Court of Chancery. My father, therefore, as regarded the quiet of his dying hours, benefited by the felicity of his times and his country. He made the best selection for the future guardianship of his six children that his opportunities allowed; from his circle of intimate friends, he selected the four who stood highest in his estimation for honour and practical wisdom: which done, and relying for the redressing of any harsh tendencies in male guardians upon the discretional power lodged in my mother, thenceforth he rested from his anxieties. Not one of these guardians but justified his choice so far as honour and integrity were concerned. Yet, after all, there is a limit (and sooner reached perhaps in England than in other divisions of Christendom) to the good that can be achieved in such cases by prospective wisdom. For we, in England, more absolutely than can be asserted of any other nation, are not *fainéans:* rich and poor, all of us have something to do. To Italy it is that we must look for a peasantry idle through two-thirds of their time. To Spain it is that we must look for an aristocracy *physically*[1] degraded under the ignoble training of women and priests, and for princes (such as Ferdinand VII) that make it the glory of their lives to have embroidered a petticoat. Amongst ourselves of this current generation, whilst those functions of guardianship may be surely counted on which presume conscientious loyalty to the interests of their wards, on the

[1] It is asserted by travellers—English, French, and German alike—that the ducal order in Spain (as that order of the Spanish peerage most carefully withdrawn from what Kentucky would call the *rough-and-tumble* discipline of a popular education) exhibit in their very persons and bodily development undisguised evidences of effeminate habits operating through many generations. It would be satisfactory to know the unexaggerated truth on this point, the truth unbiassed alike by national and by democratic prejudices.

other hand all which presume continued vigilance and provision from afar are, in simple truth, hardly compatible with our English state of society. The guardians chosen by my father, had they been the wisest and also the most energetic of men, could not in many conceivable emergencies have fulfilled his secret wishes. Of the four men, one was a merchant (not in the narrow sense of Scotland, derived originally from France, where no class of merchant princes has ever existed, but in the large noble sense of England, of Florence, of Venice): consequently, his extensive relations with sea-ports and distant colonies continually drawing off his attention, and even his personal presence, from domestic affairs, made it hopeless that he should even attempt more on behalf of his wards than slightly to watch the administration of their pecuniary interests. A second of our guardians was a rural magistrate, but in a populous district close upon Manchester, which even at that time was belted with a growing body of turbulent aliens—Welsh and Irish. He therefore, overwhelmed by the distractions of his official station, rightly perhaps conceived himself to have fulfilled his engagements as a guardian if he stood ready to come forward upon any difficulty arising, but else in ordinary cases devolved his functions upon those who enjoyed more leisure. In that category stood, beyond a doubt, a third of our guardians, the Rev. Samuel H., who was at the time of my father's death a curate at some church (I believe) in Manchester or in Salford.[1] This gentleman represented a class—large enough at all times by necessity of human nature, but in those days far larger than at present—that class, I mean, who sympathise with no spiritual sense or spiritual capacities in man; who understand by religion

[1] Salford is a large town legally distinguished from Manchester for parliamentary purposes, and divided from it physically by a river, but else virtually, as regards intercourse and reciprocal influence, is a quarter of Manchester; in fact, holding the same relation to Manchester that Southwark does to London; or, if the reader insists upon having a classical illustration of the case, the same relation that in ancient days Argos did to Mycenæ. An invitation to dinner given by the public herald of Argos could be heard to the centre of Mycenæ, and by a gourmand, if the dinner promised to be specially good, in the remoter suburb.

simply a respectable code of ethics, leaning for support upon some great mysteries dimly traced in the background, and commemorated in certain great church festivals by the *elder* churches of Christendom; as, *e.g.*, by the English,—which does not stand as to age on the Reformation epoch,—by the Romish, and by the Greek. He had composed a body of about 330 sermons, which thus, at the rate of two every Sunday, revolved through a cycle of three years; that period being modestly assumed as sufficient for insuring to their eloquence total oblivion. Possibly to a cynic some shorter cycle might have seemed equal to that effect, since their topics rose but rarely above the level of prudential ethics, and the style, though scholarly, was not impressive. As a preacher, Mr. H. was sincere, but not earnest. He was a good and conscientious man; and he made a high valuation of the pulpit as an organ of civilisation for co-operating with books; but it was impossible for any man starting from the low ground of themes so unimpassioned and so desultory as the benefits of industry, the danger from bad companions, the importance of setting a good example, or the value of perseverance, to pump up any persistent stream of earnestness either in himself or in his auditors. These auditors, again, were not of a class to desire much earnestness. There were no naughty people among them: most of them were rich, and came to church in carriages: and, as a natural result of their esteem for my reverend guardian, a number of them combined to build a church for him—viz. St. Peter's—at the point of confluence between Mosely Street and the newly projected Oxford Street, then existing only as a sketch in the portfolio of a surveyor. But what connected myself individually with Mr. H. was that two or three years previously I, together with one of my brothers (five years my senior), had been placed under his care for classical instruction. This was done, I believe, in obedience to a dying injunction of my father, who had a just esteem for Mr. S. H. as an upright man, but apparently too exalted an opinion of his scholarship: for he was but an indifferent Grecian. In whatever way the appointment arose, so it was that this gentleman, previously *tutor* in the Roman sense to all of us, now became to my brother and myself tutor also in the common English sense.

From the age of eight, up to eleven and a-half, the character and intellectual attainments of Mr. H. were therefore influentially important to myself in the development of my powers, such as they were. Even his 330 sermons, which rolled overhead with such slender effect upon his general congregation, to me became a real instrument of improvement. One-half of these, indeed, were all that I heard; for, as my father's house (Greenhay) stood at this time in the country, Manchester not having yet overtaken it, the distance obliged us to go in a carriage, and only to the morning service; but every sermon in this morning course was propounded to me as a textual basis upon which I was to raise a mimic duplicate—sometimes a pure miniature abstract—sometimes a rhetorical expansion, but preserving as much as possible of the original language, and also (which puzzled me painfully) preserving the exact succession of the thoughts; which might be easy where they stood in some dependency upon each other, as, for instance, in the development of an argument, but in arbitrary or chance arrangements was often as trying to my powers as any feat of rope-dancing. I, therefore, amongst that whole congregation,[1] was the one sole careworn

[1] "*That whole congregation*":—Originally at churches which I do not remember, where, however, in consideration of my tender age, the demands levied upon my memory were much lighter. Two or three years later, when I must have been nearing my tenth year, and when St. Peter's had been finished, occurred the opening, and consequently (as an indispensable pre-condition) the consecration of that edifice by the bishop of the diocese (viz. Chester). I, as a ward of the incumbent, was naturally amongst those specially invited to the festival; and I remember a little incident which exposed broadly the conflict of feelings inherited by the Church of England from the Puritans of the seventeenth century. The architecture of the church was Grecian; and certainly the enrichments, inside or outside, were few enough, neither florid nor obtrusive. But in the centre of the ceiling, for the sake of breaking the monotony of so large a blank white surface, there was moulded, in plaster-of-Paris, a large tablet or shield, charged with a cornucopia of fruits and flowers. And yet, when we were all assembled in the vestry waiting—rector, churchwardens, architect, and trains of dependants—there arose a deep buzz of anxiety, which soon ripened into an articulate expression of fear, that the bishop would think himself bound, like the horrid eikonoclasts of 1645, to issue his decree of utter *averruncation* to the simple decoration overhead. Fearfully did we all tread the little aisles in the procession of the prelate. Earnestly

auditor—agitated about that which, over all other heads, flowed away like water over marble slabs—viz. the somewhat torpid sermon of my somewhat torpid guardian. But this annoyance was not wholly lost: and those same $\frac{330}{2}$ sermons, which (lasting only through sixteen minutes each) were approved and forgotten by everybody else, for me became a perfect palæstra of intellectual gymnastics, far better suited to my childish weakness than could have been the sermons of Isaac Barrow or Jeremy Taylor. In these last the gorgeous imagery would have dazzled my feeble vision, and in both the gigantic thinking would have crushed my efforts at apprehension. I drew, in fact, the deepest benefits from this weekly exercise. Perhaps, also, in the end it ripened into a great advantage for me, though long and bitterly I complained of it, that I was not allowed to use a pencil in taking notes: all was to be charged upon the memory. But it is notorious that the memory strengthens as you lay burdens upon it, and becomes trustworthy as you trust it. So that, in my third year of practice, I found my abstracting and condensing powers sensibly enlarged. My guardian was gradually better satisfied: for unfortunately (and in the beginning it *was* unfortunate) always one witness could be summoned against me upon any impeachment of my fidelity—viz. the sermon itself; since, though lurking amongst the 330, the wretch was easily forked out. But these appeals grew fewer; and my guardian, as I have said, was continually better satisfied. Meantime, might not I be continually less satisfied with *him* and his 330 sermons? Not at all. Loving and trusting, without doubt or reserve, and with the deepest principles of veneration rooted in my nature, I never, upon meeting something more impressive than the average complexion of my guardian's discourses, for one moment thought of him as worse or feebler than others, but simply as different; and no more quarrelled with him for his characteristic languor than with a green riband for not being blue. By mere accident, I one day heard quoted a couplet which seemed to me sublime. It described a preacher such as sometimes arises in difficult times, or in fermenting times,—a son of thunder, that looks all

my lord looked upwards; but finally—were it courtesy, or doubtfulness as to his ground, or approbation—he passed on.

enemies in the face, and volunteers a defiance even when it would have been easy to evade it. The lines were written by Richard Baxter—who battled often with self-created storms from the first dawn of the Parliamentary War in 1642, through the period of Cromwell (to whom he was personally odious), and, finally, through the trying reigns of the second Charles and of the second James. As a pulpit orator, he was perhaps the Whitfield of the seventeenth century—the *Leuconomos* of Cowper. And thus it is that he describes the impassioned character of his own preaching—

"I preached, as never sure to preach again,"

(Even *that* was telling; but then followed this thunder-*peal*)

"And as a dying man to dying men."

This couplet, which seemed to me equally for weight and for splendour like molten gold, laid bare another aspect of the Catholic Church; revealed it as a Church militant and crusading.

Not even thus, however, did I descry any positive imperfection in my guardian. He and Baxter had fallen upon different generations. Baxter's century, from first to last, was revolutionary. Along the entire course of that seventeenth century the great principles of representative government and the rights of conscience[1] were passing through the anguish of conflict and fiery trial. Now again in my own day, at the close of the eighteenth century, it is true that all the elements of social life were thrown into the crucible—but on behalf of our neighbours, no longer of ourselves. No longer, therefore, was invoked the heroic pleader, ready for martyrdom,—preaching, therefore, "as never sure to preach again"; and I no more made it a defect in my guardian that he wanted energies for combating evils now forgotten than

[1] "*The rights of conscience*":—With which it is painful to know that Baxter did not sympathise. Religious toleration he called "soul-murder." And, if you reminded him that the want of this toleration had been his own capital grievance, he replied, "Ah, but the cases were very different: I was in the right; whereas the vast majority of those who will benefit by this newfangled toleration are shockingly in the wrong."

that he had not in patriotic fervour leaped into a gulf, like the fabulous Roman martyr, Curtius, or in zeal for liberty had not mounted a scaffold, like the real English martyr, Algernon Sidney. Every Sunday, duly as it revolved, brought with it this cruel anxiety. On Saturday night, under sad anticipation, on Sunday night, under sadder experimental knowledge, of my trying task, I slept ill: my pillow was stuffed with thorns; and until Monday morning's inspection and *armilustrium* had dismissed me from parade to "stand at ease," verily I felt like a false steward summoned to some killing audit. Then suppose Monday to be invaded by some horrible intruder,—visitor perhaps from a band of my guardian's poor relations, that in some undiscovered nook of Lancashire seemed in fancy to blacken all the fields, and suddenly at a single note of "*caw, caw,*" rose in one vast cloud like crows, and settled down for weeks at the table of my guardian and his wife, whose noble hospitality would never allow the humblest among them to be saddened by a faint welcome. In such cases, very possibly the whole week did not see the end of my troubles.

On these terms, for upwards of three and a-half years—that is, from my eighth to beyond my eleventh birth-day—my guardian and I went on cordially: he never once angry, as indeed he never had any reason for anger; I never once treating my task either as odious (which in the most abominable excess it was), or, on the other hand, as costing but a trivial effort, which practice might have taught me to hurry through with contemptuous ease. To the very last I found no ease at all in this weekly task, which never ceased to be "a thorn in the flesh": and I believe that my guardian, like many of the grim Pagan divinities, inhaled a flavour of fragrant incense from the fretting and stinging of anxiety which, as it were some holy vestal fire, he kept alive by this periodic exaction. It gave him pleasure that he could reach me in the very recesses of my dreams, where even a Pariah might look for rest; so that the Sunday, which to man, and even to the brutes within his gates, offered an interval of rest, for me was signalised as a day of martyrdom. Yet in this, after all, it is possible that he did me a service: for my constitutional infirmity of mind ran but too determinately

towards the sleep of endless reverie, and of dreamy abstraction from life and its realities.

Whether serviceable or not, however, the connexion between my guardian and myself was now drawing to its close. Some months after my eleventh birth-day, Greenhay [1] was sold, and my mother's establishment—both children and servants—was translated to Bath: only that for a few months I and one brother were still left under the care of Mr. Samuel H.; so far, that is, as regarded our education. Else, as regarded the luxurious comforts of a thoroughly English home, we became the guests, by special invitation, of a young married couple in Manchester—viz. Mr. and Mrs. K——. This incident, though otherwise without results, I look back upon with feelings inexpressibly profound, as a jewelly parenthesis of pathetic happiness—such as emerges but once in any man's life. Mr. K. was a young and rising American merchant; by which I mean that he was an Englishman who exported to the United States. He had married about three years previously a pretty and amiable young woman—well educated, and endowed with singular compass of intellect. But the distinguishing feature in this household was the spirit of love which, under the benign superintendence of the mistress, diffused itself through all its members.

The late Dr. Arnold of Rugby, amongst many novel ideas, which found no welcome even with his friends, insisted earnestly and often upon this—viz. that a great danger was threatening our social system in Great Britain from the austere separation existing between our educated and our working classes, and that a more conciliatory style of intercourse between these two bisections of our social body must be established, or else—a tremendous revolution. This is not the place to discuss so large a question; and I shall content myself with making two remarks. The first is this—that, although a change of the sort contemplated by Dr. Arnold might, if considered as an operative *cause*, point

[1] "*Greenhay*":—A country-house built by my father; and at the time of its foundation (say in 1791 or 1792) separated from the last outskirts of Manchester by an entire mile; but now, and for many a year, overtaken by the hasty strides of this great city, and long since (I presume) absorbed into its mighty uproar.

forward to some advantages, on the other hand, if considered as an *effect*, it points backward to a less noble constitution of society by much than we already enjoy. Those nations whose upper classes speak paternally and caressingly to the working classes, and to servants in particular, do so because they speak from the lofty stations of persons having civil rights to those who have none. Two centuries back, when a military chieftain addressed his soldiers as "*my children*," he did so because he was an irresponsible despot exercising uncontrolled powers of life and death. From the moment when legal rights have been won for the poorest classes, inevitable respect on the part of the higher classes extinguishes for ever the affectionate style which belongs naturally to the state of pupilage or infantine bondage.

That is my first remark: my second is this—that the change advocated by Dr. Arnold, whether promising or not, is practically impossible; or possible, I should say, through one sole channel—viz. that of domestic servitude. There only do the two classes concerned come hourly into contact. On that stage only they meet without intrusion upon each other. There only is an opening for change. And a wise mistress, who possesses tact enough to combine a gracious affability with a self-respect that never slumbers nor permits her to descend into gossip, will secure the attachment of all young and impressible women. Such a mistress was Mrs. K——. She had won the gratitude of her servants from the first by making the amplest provision for their comfort; their confidence, by listening with patience, and counselling with prudence; and their respect, by refusing to intermeddle with gossiping personalities always tending to slander. To this extent, perhaps, most mistresses might follow her example. But the happiness which reigned in Mrs. K——'s house at this time depended very much upon special causes. All the eight persons had the advantage of youth; and the three young female servants were under the spell of fascination, such as could rarely be counted on, from a spectacle held up hourly before their eyes,—that spectacle which of all others is the most touching to womanly sensibilities, and which any one of these servants might hope, without presumption, to realise for herself,—the spectacle, I

mean, of a happy marriage union between two persons who lived in harmony so absolute with each other as to be independent of the world outside. How tender and self-sufficing such a union might be, they saw with their own eyes. The season was then mid-winter, which of itself draws closer all household ties. Their own labours, as generally in respectable English services, were finished for the most part by two o'clock; and, as the hours of evening drew nearer, when the master's return might be looked for without fail, beautiful was the smile of anticipation upon the gentle features of the mistress: even more beautiful the reflex of that smile, half-unconscious, and half-repressed, upon the features of the sympathising hand-maidens. One child, a little girl of two years old, had then crowned the happiness of the K——s. She naturally lent her person at all times, and apparently in all places at once, to the improvement of the family groups. My brother and myself, who had been trained from infancy to the courteous treatment of servants, filled up a vacancy in the graduated scale of ascending ages, and felt in varying degrees the depths of a peace which we could not adequately understand or appreciate. Bad tempers there were none amongst us; nor any opening for personal jealousies; nor, through the privilege of our common youth, either angry recollections breathing from the past, or fretting anxieties gathering from the future. The spirit of hope and the spirit of peace (so it seemed to me, when looking back upon this profound calm) had, for their own enjoyment, united in a sisterly league to blow a solitary bubble of visionary happiness—and to sequester from the unresting hurricanes of life one solitary household of eight persons within a four months' lull, as if within some Arabian tent on some untrodden wilderness, withdrawn from human intrusion, or even from knowledge, by worlds of mist and vapour.

How deep was that lull! and yet, as in a human atmosphere, how frail! Did the visionary bubble burst at once? Not so: but silently and by measured steps, like a dissolving palace of snow, it collapsed. In the superb expression of Shakspere, minted by himself, and drawn from his own aerial fancy, like a cloud it "*dislimned*"; lost its lineaments by stealthy steps. Already the word "*parting*" (for myself

and my brother were under summons for Bath) hoisted the first signal for breaking up. Next, and not very long afterwards, came a mixed signal: alternate words of joy and grief—marriage and death severed the sisterly union amongst the young female servants. Then, thirdly, but many years later, vanished from earth, and from peace the deepest that can support itself on earth, summoned to a far deeper peace, the mistress of the household herself, together with her first-born child. Some years later, perhaps twenty from this time, as I stood sheltering myself from rain in a shop within the most public street of Manchester, the master of the establishment drew my attention to a gentleman on the opposite side of the street — roaming along in a reckless style of movement, and apparently insensible to the notice which he attracted. "That," said the master of the shop, "was once a leading merchant in our town; but he met with great commercial embarrassments. There was no impeachment of his integrity, or (as I believe) of his discretion. But, what with these commercial calamities, and deaths in his family, he lost all hope; and you see what sort of consolation it is that he seeks"—meaning to say that his style of walking argued intoxication. I did not think so. There was a settled misery in his eye, but complicated with *that* an expression of nervous distraction, that, if it should increase, would make life an intolerable burden. I never saw him again, and thought with horror of his being called in old age to face the fierce tragedies of life. For many reasons, I recoiled from forcing myself upon his notice: but I had ascertained, some time previously to this casual rencounter, that he and myself were, at that date, all that remained of the once joyous household. At present, and for many a year, I am myself the sole relic from that household sanctuary—sweet, solemn, profound—that concealed, as in some ark floating on solitary seas, eight persons, since called away, all except myself, one after one, to that rest which only could be deeper than ours was then.

When I left the K——s, I left Manchester; and during the next three years I was sent to two very different schools: first, to a public one—viz. the Bath Grammar School, then and since famous for its excellence; secondly,

to a private school in Wiltshire.[1] At the end of the three years, I found myself once again in Manchester. I was then fifteen years old, and a trifle more ; and as it had come to the knowledge of Mr. G., a banker in Lincolnshire (whom hitherto I have omitted to notice amongst my guardians, as the one too generally prevented from interfering by his remoteness from the spot, but whom otherwise I should have recorded with honour, as by much the ablest amongst them) that some pecuniary advantages were attached to a residence at the Manchester Grammar School, whilst in other respects that school seemed as eligible as any other, he had counselled my mother to send me thither. In fact, a three years' residence at this school obtained an annual allowance for seven years of nearly (if not quite) £50 ; which sum, added to my own patrimonial income of £150, would have made up the annual £200 ordinarily considered the proper allowance for an Oxford under-graduate. No objection arising from any quarter, this plan was adopted, and soon afterwards carried into effect.

On a day, therefore, it was in the closing autumn (or rather in the opening winter) of 1800 that my first introduction took place to the Manchester Grammar School. The school-room showed already in its ample proportions some hint of its pretensions as an endowed school, or school of that class which I believe peculiar to England. To this limited extent had the architectural sense of power been timidly and parsimoniously invoked. Beyond that, nothing had been attempted ; and the dreary expanse of whitewashed walls, that at so small a cost might have been embellished by plaster-of-Paris friezes and large medallions, illustrating to the eye of the youthful student the most memorable glorifications of literature—these were bare as the walls of a poor-house or a lazaretto ; buildings whose functions, as thoroughly sad and gloomy, the mind recoils from drawing into relief by sculpture or painting. But this building was dedicated to purposes that were noble. The naked walls clamoured for decoration : and how easily might tablets have been moulded—exhibiting (as a first homage to literature) Athens, with the wisdom of Athens, in the person of Pisis-

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. pp. 160, 161.—M.

tratus, concentrating the general energies upon the revisal and the re-casting of the "Iliad." Or (second) the Athenian captives in Sicily, within the fifth century B.C., as winning noble mercy for themselves by some

> "Repeated air
> Of sad Electra's poet."[1]

Such, and so sudden, had been the oblivion of earthly passions wrought by the contemporary poet of Athens that in a moment the wrath of Sicily, with all its billows, ran down into a heavenly calm; and he that could plead for his redemption no closer relation to Euripides than the accident of recalling some scatterings from his divine verses suddenly found his chains dropping to the ground, and himself, that in the morning had risen a despairing slave in a stone-quarry, translated at once as a favoured brother into a palace of Syracuse.[2] Or, again, how easy to represent (third) "the great Emathian conqueror," that in the very opening of his career, whilst visiting Thebes with vengeance, nevertheless relented at the thought of literature, and

> "Bade spare
> The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
> Went to the ground."[3]

Alexander might have been represented amongst the colonnades of some Persian capital—Ecbatana or Babylon, Susa or Persepolis—in the act of receiving from Greece, as a *nuzzur* more awful than anything within the gift of the "barbaric East," a jewelled casket containing the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey"; creations that already have lived almost as long as the Pyramids.

Puritanically bald and odious, therefore, in my eyes, was the hall up which my guardian and myself paced solemnly—though not Miltonically "riding up to the Soldan's chair," yet, in fact, within a more limited kingdom, advancing to the chair of a more absolute despot. This potentate was

[1] Milton: Sonnet VIII.—M.

[2] On this fine legend Browning has founded his *Balaustion: with a Transcript from Euripides.*—M.

[3] Milton: Sonnet VIII.—M.

the head-master, or *archididascalus*, of the Manchester Grammar School; and that school was variously distinguished. It was (1) ancient, having in fact been founded by a bishop of Exeter in an early part of the sixteenth century, so as to be now, in 1856, more than 330 years old; (2) it was rich, and was annually growing richer; and (3) it was dignified by a beneficial relation to the magnificent University of Oxford.

The head-master at that time was Mr. Charles Lawson. In former editions of this work I created him a doctor; my object being to evade too close an approach to the realities of the case, and consequently to personalities, which (though indifferent to myself) would have been in some cases displeasing to others. A doctor, however, Mr. Lawson was not; nor in the account of law a clergyman. Yet most people, governed unconsciously by the associations surrounding their composite idea of a dignified schoolmaster, invested him with the clerical character. And in reality he *had* taken deacon's orders in the Church of England. But not the less he held himself to be a layman, and was addressed as such by all his correspondents of rank, who might be supposed best to understand the technical rules of English etiquette. Etiquette in such cases cannot entirely detach itself from law. Now, in English law, as was shown in Horne Tooke's case, the rule is, *Once a clergyman, and always a clergyman.* The sacred character with which ordination clothes a man is indelible. But, on the other hand, who *is* a clergyman? Not he that has taken simply the initial orders of a deacon,—so at least I have heard,—but he that has taken the second and full orders of a priest. If otherwise, then there was a great mistake current amongst Mr. Lawson's friends in addressing him as an esquire.

Squire or not a squire, however, parson or not a parson—whether sacred or profane—Mr. Lawson was in some degree interesting by his position and his recluse habits. Life was over with him, for its hopes and for its trials. Or at most one trial yet awaited him; which was—to fight with a painful malady, and fighting to die. He still had his dying to do: he was in arrear as to *that:* else all was finished. It struck me (but, with such limited means for judging, I might

easily be wrong) that his understanding was of a narrow order. But that did not disturb the interest which surrounded him now in his old age (probably seventy-five, or more), nor make any drawback from the desire I had to spell backwards and re-compose the text of his life. What had been his fortunes in this world? Had they travelled upwards or downwards? What triumphs had he enjoyed in the sweet and solemn cloisters of Oxford? What mortifications in the harsh world outside? Two only had survived in the malicious traditions of "his friends." He was a Jacobite (as were so many amongst my dear Lancastrian compatriots); had drunk the Pretender's health, and had drunk it in company with that Dr. Byrom who had graced the *symposium* by the famous equivocating *impromptu*[1] to the health of that prince. Mr. Lawson had therefore been obliged to witness the final prostration of his political party. That was his earliest mortification. His second, about seven years later, was that he had been jilted, and with circumstances (at least so I heard) of cruel scorn. Was it that *he* had interpreted in a sense too flattering for himself ambiguous expressions of favour in the lady? or that she in cruel caprice had disowned the hopes which she had authorised? However this might be, half-a-century of soothing and reconciling years had cicatrised the wounds of Mr. Lawson's heart. The lady of 1752, if living in 1800, must be furiously wrinkled. And a strange metaphysical question arises:

[1] "*Equivocating impromptu*": — The party had gathered in a tumultuary way; so that some Capulets had mingled with the Montagues, one of whom called upon Dr. Byrom to drink *The King, God bless him! and Confusion to the Pretender!* Upon which the doctor sang out—

> "God bless the king, of church and state defender;
> God bless (no harm in *blessing*) the Pretender!
> But who Pretender is, and who the King—
> God bless us all! that's quite another thing."

Dr. Byrom [John Byrom, 1691-1763] was otherwise famous than as a Jacobite—viz. as the author of a very elaborate shorthand, which (according to some who have examined it) rises even to a philosophic dignity. David Hartley in particular said of it that, "if ever a philosophic language (as projected by Bishop Wilkins, by Leibnitz, &c.) should be brought to bear, in that case Dr. Byrom's work would furnish the proper character for its notation."

Whether, when the object of an impassioned love has herself faded into a shadow, the fiery passion itself can still survive as an abstraction, still mourn over its wrongs, still clamour for redress. I have heard of such cases. In Wordsworth's poem of "Ruth" (which was founded, as I happen to know, upon facts) it is recorded as an affecting incident that, some months after the first frenzy of her disturbed mind had given way to medical treatment, and had lapsed into a gentler form of lunacy, she was dismissed from confinement; and, upon finding herself uncontrolled among the pastoral scenes where she played away her childhood, she gradually fell back to the original habits of her life whilst yet undisturbed by sorrow. Something similar had happened to Mr. Lawson: and some time after his first shock, amongst other means for effacing that deep-grooved impression, he had laboured to replace himself, as much as was possible, in the situation of a college student. In this effort he was assisted considerably by the singular arrangement of the house attached to his official station. For an English house it was altogether an oddity, being, in fact, built upon a Roman plan. All the rooms on both storeys had their windows looking down upon a little central court. This court was quadrangular, but so limited in its dimensions that by a Roman it would have been regarded as the *impluvium:* for Mr. Lawson, however, with a little exertion of fancy, it transmuted itself into a college quadrangle. Here, therefore, were held the daily "callings-over," at which every student was obliged to answer upon being named. And thus the unhappy man, renewing continually the fancy that he was still standing in an Oxford quadrangle, perhaps cheated himself into the belief that all had been a dream which concerned the caprices of the lady, and the lady herself a phantom. College usages also which served to strengthen this fanciful *alibi*—such, for instance, as the having two plates arranged before him at dinner (one for the animal, the other for the vegetable, food)—were reproduced in Millgate. One sole luxury also, somewhat costly, which, like most young men of easy income, he had allowed himself at Oxford, was now retained long after it had become practically useless. This was a hunter for himself, and another

for his groom, which he continued to keep, in spite of the increasing war-taxes, many a year after he had almost ceased to ride. Once in three or four months he would have the horses saddled and brought out. Then, with considerable effort, he swung himself into the saddle, moved off at a quiet amble, and in about fifteen or twenty minutes might be seen returning from an excursion of two miles, under the imagination that he had laid in a stock of exercise sufficient for another period of a hundred days. Meantime Mr. Lawson had sought his main consolation in the great classics of elder days. His senior *alumni* were always working their way through some great scenic poet that had shaken the stage of Athens; and more than one of his classes, never ending, still beginning, were daily solacing him with the gaieties of Horace, in his Epistles or in his Satires. The Horatian jests indeed to *him* never grew old. On coming to the *plagosus Orbilius*, or any other sally of pleasantry, he still threw himself back in his arm-chair, as he *had* done through fifty years, with what seemed heart-shaking bursts of sympathetic merriment. Mr. Lawson, indeed, could afford to be sincerely mirthful over the word *plagosus*. There are gloomy tyrants, exulting in the discipline of fear, to whom and to whose pupils this word must call up remembrances too degrading for any but affected mirth. Allusions that are too fearfully personal cease to be subjects of playfulness. Sycophancy only it is that laughs; and the artificial merriment is but the language of shrinking and grovelling deprecation. Different, indeed, was the condition of the Manchester Grammar School. It was honourable both to the masters and the upper boys, through whom only such a result was possible, that in that school, during my knowledge of it (viz. during the closing year of the eighteenth century and the two opening years of the nineteenth), all punishments that appealed to the sense of bodily pain had fallen into disuse; and this at a period long before any public agitation had begun to stir in that direction. How then was discipline maintained? It was maintained through the self-discipline of the senior boys, and through the efficacy of their example, combined with their system of rules. Noble are the impulses of opening manhood where

they are not utterly ignoble: at that period, I mean, when the poetic sense begins to blossom, and when boys are first made sensible of the paradise that lurks in female smiles. Had the school been entirely a day-school, too probable it is that the vulgar brawling tendencies of boys left to themselves would have prevailed. But it happened that the elder section of the school—those on the brink of manhood, and by incalculable degrees the more scholar-like section, all who read, meditated, or began to kindle into the love of literature—were boarders in Mr. Lawson's house. The students, therefore, of the house carried an overwhelming influence into the school. They were bound together by links of brotherhood; whereas the day-scholars were disconnected. Over and above this, it happened luckily that there was no playground, not the smallest, attached to the school; that is, none was attached to the *upper* or *grammar* school. But there was also, and resting on the same liberal endowment, a *lower* school, where the whole machinery of teaching was applied to the lowest mechanical accomplishments of reading and writing. The hall in which this servile business was conducted ran under the upper school; it was, therefore, I presume, a subterraneous duplicate of the upper hall. And, since the upper rose only by two or three feet above the level of the neighbouring streets, the lower school should naturally have been at a great depth *below* these streets. In that case it would be a dark crypt, such as we see under some cathedrals; and it would have argued a singular want of thoughtfulness in the founder to have laid one part of his establishment under an original curse of darkness. As the access to this plebeian school lay downwards through long flights of steps, I never found surplus energy enough for investigating the problem. But, as the ground broke away precipitously at that point into lower levels, I presume, upon consideration, that the subterranean crypt will be found open on one side to visitations from sun and moon. So that, for this base mechanic school there may, after all, have been a playground. But for ours in the upper air, I repeat, there was none; not so much as would have bleached a lady's pocket-handkerchief; and this one defect carried along with it unforeseen advantages.

Lord Bacon it is who notices the subtle policy which may lurk in the mere external figure of a table. A square table, having an undeniable head and foot, two polar extremities of what is highest and lowest, a perihelion and an aphelion, together with equatorial sides, opens at a glance a large career to ambition; whilst a circular table sternly represses all such aspiring dreams, and so does a triangular table. Yet, if the triangle should be right-angled, then the Lucifer seated at the right angle might argue that he *subtended* all the tenants of the hypothenuse; being, therefore, as much nobler than they as Atlas was nobler than the globe which he carried. It was, by the way, some arrangement of this nature which constituted the original feature of distinction in John o' Groat's house, and not at all (as most people suppose) the high northern latitude of this house. John, it seems, finished the feuds for precedency, not by legislating this way or that, but by cutting away the possibility of such feuds through the assistance of a round table. The same principle must have guided King Arthur amongst his knights, Charlemagne amongst his paladins, and sailors in their effectual distribution of the peril attached to a mutinous remonstrance by the admirable device of a "round-robin." Even two little girls, as Harrington remarks in his "Oceana," have oftentimes hit upon an expedient, through pure mother-wit, more effectual than all the schools of philosophy could have suggested, for insuring the impartial division of an orange; which expedient is that either of the two shall divide, but then that the other shall have the right of choice. You divide, and I choose. Such is the formula; and an angel could not devise a more absolute guarantee for the equity of the division than by thus forcing the divider to become the inheritor of any possible disadvantages that he may have succeeded in creating by his own act of division. In all these cases one seemingly trivial precaution opens, in the next stage, into a world of irresistible consequences. And, in our case, an effect not less disproportionate followed out of that one accident, apparently so slight, that we had no playground. We of the seniority, who, by thoughtfulness, and the conscious dignity of dealing largely with literature, were already indisposed to boyish sports, found, through the

defect of a playground, that our choice and our pride were also our necessity. Even the proudest of us benefited by that coercion; for many would else have sold their privilege of pride for an hour's amusement, and have become, at least, occasional conformists. A day more than usually fine, a trial of skill more than usually irritating to the sense of special superiority, would have seduced most of us in the end into the surrender of our exclusiveness. Indiscriminate familiarity would have followed as an uncontrollable result; since to mingle with others in common acts of business may leave the sense of reserve undisturbed: but all reserve gives way before a common intercourse in pleasure. As it was, what with our confederation through house-membership, what with our reciprocal sympathies in the problems suggested by books, we had become a club of boys (amongst whom might be four or five that were even young men, counting eighteen or nineteen years) altogether as thoughtful and as self-respecting as can often exist even amongst adults. Even the subterraneous school contributed something to our self-esteem. It formed a subordinate section of our own establishment, that kept before our eyes, by force of contrast, the dignity inherent in our own constitution. Its object was to master humble accomplishments that were within the reach of *mechanic* efforts: everything mechanic is limited; whereas we felt that *our* object, even if our name of *grammar* school presented that object in what seemed too limited a shape, was substantially noble, and tended towards the infinite. But in no long time I came to see that, as to the *name*, we were all of us under a mistake. Being asked what a *grammar* school indicates, what it professes to teach, there is scarcely any man who would not reply, "Teach? why, it teaches grammar: what else?" But this is a mistake: as I have elsewhere explained, *grammatica* in this combination does not mean grammar (though grammar also obeys the movements of a most subtle philosophy), but *literature*. Look into Suetonius. Those "*grammatici*" whom he memorialises as an order of men flocking to Rome in the days of the Flavian family, were not *grammarians* at all, but what the French by a comprehensive name style *litterateurs* —that is, they were men who (1) studied literature, (2)

who taught literature, (3) who practically produced literature. And, upon the whole, *grammatica* is perhaps the least objectionable Latin equivalent for our word *literature*.

Having thus sketched the characteristic points distinguishing the school and the presiding master (for of masters, senior and junior, there were four in this upper school), I return to my own inaugural examination. On this day, memorable to myself, as furnishing the starting-point for so long a series of days, saddened by haughty obstinacy on one side, made effective by folly on the other, no sooner had my guardian retired than Mr. Lawson produced from his desk a volume of the "Spectator," and instructed me to throw into as good Latin as I could some paper of Steele's—not the whole, but perhaps a third part. No better exercise could have been devised for testing the extent of my skill as a Latinist. And here I ought to make an explanation. In the previous edition of these "Confessions," writing sometimes too rapidly, and with little precision in cases of little importance, I conveyed an impression which I had not designed with regard to the true nature of my pretensions as a Grecian; and something of the same correction will apply to that narrower accomplishment which was the subject of my present examination. Neither in Greek nor in Latin was my *knowledge* very extensive; my age made *that* impossible; and especially because in those days there were no decent guides through the thorny jungles of the Latin language, far less of the Greek. When I mention that the *Port Royal* Greek Grammar translated by Dr. Nugent was about the best key extant in English to the innumerable perplexities of Greek diction, and that, for the *res metrica*, Morell's valuable "Thesaurus," having then never been reprinted, was rarely to be seen, the reader will conclude that a schoolboy's *knowledge* of Greek could not be other than slender. Slender indeed was mine. Yet stop! *what* was slender? Simply my *knowledge* of Greek; for that knowledge stretches by tendency to the infinite; but not therefore my *command* of Greek. The *knowledge* of Greek must always hold some gross proportion to the time spent upon it, —probably, therefore, to the age of the student; but the *command* over a language, the power of adapting it plastically

to the expression of your own thoughts, is almost exclusively a gift of nature, and has very little connexion with time. Take the supreme trinity of Greek scholars that flourished between the English Revolution of 1688 and the beginning of the nineteenth century—which trinity I suppose to be, confessedly, Bentley, Valckenaer, and Porson: such are the men, it will be generally fancied, whose aid should be invoked, in the event of our needing some eloquent Greek inscription on a public monument. I am of a different opinion. The greatest scholars have usually proved to be the poorest composers in either of the classic languages. Sixty years ago, we had, from four separate doctors, four separate Greek versions of "Gray's Elegy," all unworthy of the national scholarship. Yet one of these doctors was actually Porson's predecessor in the Greek chair at Cambridge. But, as he (Dr. Cooke) was an obscure man, take an undeniable Grecian, of punctilious precision—viz. Richard Dawes, the well-known author of the "Miscellanea Critica." This man, a very *martinet* in the delicacies of Greek composition—and who *should* have been a Greek scholar of some mark, since often enough he flew at the throat of Richard Bentley—wrote and published a specimen of a Greek "Paradise Lost,"[1] and also two most sycophantic idyls addressed to George II on the death of his "august" papa. It is difficult to imagine anything meaner in conception or more childish in expression than these attempts. Now, against *them* I will stake in competition a copy of iambic verses by a boy, who died, I believe, at sixteen—viz. a son of Mr. Pitt's tutor, Tomline, Bishop of Winchester.[2]

[1] He issued, in 1736, proposals for a Greek translation of the First Book of *Paradise Lost;* but, after publishing specimens, gave up the undertaking.—M.

[2] "*A copy of iambic verses*":—They will be found in the work on the Greek article by Middleton, Bishop of Calcutta, who was the boy's tutor. On this occasion I would wish to observe that verses like Dawes's, meant to mimic Homer or Theocritus, or more generally dactylic hexameters, are perfectly useless as tests of power to think freely in Greek. If such verses are examined, it will be found that the orchestral magnificence of the metre, and the sonorous cadence of each separate line, absolutely *force* upon the thoughts a mere necessity of being discontinuous. From this signal defect only iambic senarii are free; this metre possessing a power of plastic interfusion

Universally I contend that the faculty of clothing the thoughts in a Greek dress is a function of natural sensibility, in a great degree disconnected from the extent or the accuracy of the writer's grammatical skill in Greek.

These explanations are too long. The reader will understand, as their sum, that what I needed in such a case was, not so much a critical familiarity with the syntax of the language, or a *copia verborum*, as great agility in reviewing the relations of one idea to another, so as to present modern and unclassical objects under such aspects as might suggest periphrases in substitution for direct names, where names could not be had, and everywhere to colour my translation with as rich a display of idiomatic forms as the circumstances of the case would allow. I succeeded, and beyond my expectation. For once—being the first time that he had been known to do such a thing, but also the very last—Mr. Lawson did absolutely pay me a compliment. And with another compliment more than verbal he crowned his gracious condescensions—viz. with my provisional instalment in his highest class ; not the highest at that moment, since there was one other class above us ; but this other was on the wing for Oxford within some few weeks ; which change being accomplished, we (viz. I and two others) immediately moved up into the supreme place.

Two or three days after this examination—viz. on the Sunday following—I transferred myself to head-quarters at Mr. Lawson's house. About nine o'clock in the evening, I was conducted by a servant up a short flight of stairs, through a series of gloomy and unfurnished little rooms, having small windows but no doors, to the common room (as in Oxford it would technically be called) of the senior boys. Everything had combined to depress me. To leave the society of accomplished women—*that* was already a signal privation. The season besides was rainy, which in itself is a sure source of depression ; and the forlorn aspect of the rooms completed my dejection. But the scene changed as the door was thrown open : faces kindling with animation became visible ; and from a company of boys, numbering sixteen or

similar in kind, though inferior in degree, to the English blank verse when Miltonically written.

eighteen, scattered about the room, two or three, whose age entitled them to the rank of leaders, came forward to receive me with a courtesy which I had not looked for. The grave kindness and the absolute sincerity of their manner impressed me most favourably. I had lived familiarly with boys gathered from all quarters of the island at the Bath Grammar School: and for some time (when visiting Lord Altamont at Eton[1]) with boys of the highest aristocratic pretensions. At Bath and at Eton, though not equally, there prevailed a tone of higher polish; and in the air, speech, deportment of the majority could be traced at once a premature knowledge of the world. They had indeed the advantage over my new friends in graceful self-possession; but, on the other hand, the best of them suffered by comparison with these Manchester boys in the qualities of visible self-restraint and of self-respect. At Eton high rank was distributed pretty liberally; but in the Manchester school the parents of many boys were artisans, or of that rank; some even had sisters that were menial servants; and those who stood higher by pretensions of birth and gentle blood were, at the most, the sons of rural gentry or of clergymen. And I believe that, with the exception of three or four brothers, belonging to a clergyman's family at York, all were, like myself, natives of Lancashire. At that time my experience was too limited to warrant me in expressing any opinion, one way or the other, upon the relative pretensions—moral and intellectual—of the several provinces in our island. But since then I have seen reason to agree with the late Dr. Cooke Taylor[2] in awarding the pre-eminence, as regards energy, power to face suffering, and other high qualities, to the natives of Lancashire. Even a century back, they were distinguished for the culture of refined tastes. In musical skill and sensibility, no part of Europe, with the exception of a few places in Germany, could pretend to rival them: and, accordingly, even in Handel's days, but for the chorus-singers from Lancashire, his oratorios must have remained a treasure, if not absolutely sealed, at any rate most imperfectly revealed.

[1] Then Lord Westport. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 161 *et seq.*—M.

[2] William Cooke Taylor, LL.D. (1800-1849), a versatile and voluminous writer.—M.

One of the young men, noticing my state of dejection, brought out some brandy—a form of alcohol which I, for my part, tasted now for the first time, having previously taken only wine, and never once in quantities to affect my spirits. So much the greater was my astonishment at the rapid change worked in my state of feeling—a change which at once reinstalled me in my natural advantages for conversation. Towards this nothing was wanting but a question of sufficient interest. And a question arose naturally out of a remark addressed by one of the boys to myself, implying that perhaps I had intentionally timed my arrival so as to escape the Sunday evening exercise. No, I replied; not at all; what *was* that exercise? Simply an off-hand translation from the little work of Grotius[1] on the Evidences of Christianity. Did I know the book? No, I did not; all the direct knowledge which I had of Grotius was built upon his metrical translations into Latin of various fragments surviving from the Greek scenical poets, and these translations had struck me as exceedingly beautiful. On the other hand, his work of highest pretension, "De Jure Belli et Pacis," so signally praised by Lord Bacon, I had not read at all; but I had heard such an account of it from a very thoughtful person as made it probable that Grotius was stronger, and felt himself stronger, on literary than on philosophic ground. Then, with regard to his little work on the Mosaic and Christian revelations, I had heard very disparaging opinions about it; two especially. One amounted to no more than this—that the question was argued with a logic far inferior, in point of cogency, to that of Lardner and Paley. Here several boys interposed their loud assent, as regarded Paley in particular. Paley's "Evidences," at that time just seven years old,[2] had already become a subject of study amongst them. But the other objection impeached not so much the dialectic acuteness as the learning of Grotius—at least, the appropriate learning. According to the anecdote current upon this subject, Dr. Edward Pococke, the great oriental scholar of England in the seventeenth century, when called upon to translate the little work of Grotius into Arabic or

[1] Entitled "De Veritate Christianæ Religionis."
[2] First published in 1794.—M.

Turkish, had replied by pointing to the idle legend of Mahomet's pigeon or dove, as a reciprocal messenger between the prophet and heaven—which legend had been accredited and adopted by Grotius in the blindest spirit of credulity. Such a baseless fable, Pococke alleged, would work a double mischief: not only it would ruin the authority of that particular book in the East, but would damage Christianity for generations, by making known to the followers of the Prophet that their master was undervalued amongst the Franks on the authority of nursery tales, and that these tales were accredited by the leading Frankish scholars.

A twofold result of evil would follow: not only would our Christian erudition and our Christian scholars be scandalously disparaged; a consequence that in some cases might not be incompatible with a sense amongst Mahometans that the strength of Christianity itself was left unaffected by the errors and blunders of its champions; but, secondly, there would be in this case a strong reaction against Christianity itself. Plausibly enough it would be inferred that a vast religious philosophy could have no powerful battery of arguments in reserve, when it placed its main anti-Mahometan reliance upon so childish a fable: since, allowing even for a blameless assent to this fable amongst nations having no direct intercourse with Mussulmans, still it would argue a shocking frailty in Christianity that its main pleadings rested, not upon any strength of its own, but simply upon a weakness in its antagonist.

At this point, when the cause of Grotius seemed utterly desperate, G—— (a boy whom subsequently I had reason to admire as equally courageous, truthful, and far-seeing) suddenly changed the whole field of view. He offered no defence for the ridiculous fable of the pigeon; which pigeon, on the contrary, he represented as drawing in harness with that Christian goose which at one time was universally believed by Mahometans to lead the vanguard of the earliest Crusaders, and which, in a limited extent, really had been a true historical personage. So far he gave up Grotius as indefensible. But on the main question, and the very extensive question, of his apparent imbecility when collated with Paley, &c., suddenly and in one sentence he revolu-

tionised the whole logic of that comparison. Paley and Lardner, he said, what was it that they sought? *Their* object was avowedly to benefit by any argument, evidence, or presumption whatsoever, no matter whence drawn, so long as it was true or probable, and fitted to sustain the credibility of any element in the Christian creed. Well, was not *that* object common to them and to Grotius? Not at all. Too often had he (the boy G——) secretly noticed the abstinence of Grotius (apparently unaccountable) from certain obvious advantages of argument, not to suspect that, in narrowing his own field of disputation, he had a deliberate purpose, and was moving upon the line of some very different policy. Clear it was to *him* that Grotius, for some reason, declined to receive evidence except from one special and limited class of witnesses. Upon this, some of us laughed at such a self-limitation as a wild bravado, recalling that rope-dancing feat of some verse-writers who, through each several stanza in its turn, had gloried in dispensing with some one separate consonant, some vowel, or some diphthong, and thus achieving a triumph such as crowns with laurel that pedestrian athlete who wins a race by hopping on one leg, or wins it under the inhuman condition of confining both legs within a sack. "*No, no,*" impatiently interrupted G——. "All such fantastic conflicts with self-created difficulties terminate in pure ostentation, and profit nobody. But the self-imposed limitations of Grotius had a special purpose, and realised a value not otherwise attainable." If Grotius accepts no arguments or presumptions except from Mussulmans, from Infidels, or from those who rank as Neutrals, then has he adapted his book to a separate and peculiar audience. The Neutral man will hearken to authorities notoriously Neutral; Mussulmans will show deference to the statements of Mussulmans; the Sceptic will bow to the reasonings of Scepticism. All these persons, that would have been repelled on the very threshold from such testimonies as begin in a spirit of hostility to themselves, will listen thoughtfully to suggestions offered in a spirit of conciliation; much more so if offered by people occupying the same ground at starting as themselves.

At the cost of some disproportion, I have ventured to

rehearse this inaugural conversation amongst the leaders of the school. Whether G—— were entirely correct in this application of a secret key to the little work of Grotius, I do not know. I take blame to myself that I do not; for I also must have been called upon for my quota to the Sunday evening studies on the "De Veritate," and must therefore have held in my hands the ready means for solving the question.[1]

Meantime, as a solitary act of silent observation in a boy not fifteen, this deciphering idea of G——'s, in direct resistance to the received idea, extorted my admiration; and equally, whether true or false as regarded the immediate fact. That any person, in the very middle storm of chase, when a headlong movement carries all impulses into one current, should in the twinkling of an eye recall himself to the unexpected "doubles" of the game, wheel as *that* wheels, and sternly resist the instincts of the one preoccupying assumption, argues a sagacity not often heard of in boyhood. Was G—— right? In that case he picked a lock which others had failed to pick. Was he wrong? In that case he sketched the idea and outline of a better work (better, as more original and more special in its service) than any which Grotius has himself accomplished.

Not, however, the particular boy, but the particular school, it was my purpose, in this place, to signalise for praise and gratitude. In after years, when an under-graduate at Oxford, I had an opportunity of reading as it were in a mirror the characteristic pretensions and the average success of many celebrated schools. Such a mirror I found in the ordinary conversation and in the favourite reading of young gownsmen belonging to the many different colleges of Oxford. Generally speaking, each college had a filial connexion (strict[2] or not strict) with some one or more of

[1] Some excuse, however, for my own want of energy is suggested by the fact that very soon after my matriculation Mr. Lawson substituted for Grotius, as the Sunday evening lecture-book, Dr. Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament. "Out of sight, out of mind"; and in that way only can I account for my own neglect to clear up the question. Or perhaps, after all, I *did* clear it up, and in a long life-march subsequently may have dropped it by the wayside.

[2] "*Strict or not strict*": —In some colleges the claims of *alumni*

our great public schools. These, fortunately for England, are diffused through all her counties: and, as the main appointments to the capital offices in such *public* schools are often vested by law in Oxford or Cambridge, this arrangement guarantees a sound system of teaching; so that any failures in the result must presumably be due to the individual student. Failures, on the whole, I do not suppose that there were. Classical attainments that might be styled even splendid were not then, nor are now, uncommon. And yet in one great feature many of those schools, even the very best, when thus tried by their fruits, left a painful memento of failure; or rather not of failure as in relation to any purpose that they steadily recognised, but of *wilful* and *intentional* disregard, as towards a purpose alien from any duty of theirs, or any task which they had ever undertaken —a failure, namely, in relation to *modern* literature—a neglect to unroll its mighty charts: and amongst this modern literature a special neglect (such as seems almost brutal) of our own English literature, though pleading its patent of precedency in a voice so trumpet-tongued. To myself, whose homage ascended night and day towards the great altars of English Poetry or Eloquence, it was shocking and revolting to find in high-minded young countrymen, burning with sensibility that sought vainly for a corresponding object, deep unconsciousness of an all-sufficient object—namely, in that great inheritance of our literature which sometimes kindled enthusiasm in our public enemies. How painful to see or to know that vast revelations of grandeur and beauty are wasting themselves for ever—forests teeming with gorgeous life, floral wildernesses hidden inaccessibly; whilst, at the same time, in contraposition to that evil, behold a corresponding evil—viz. that with equal prodigality the great capacities of enjoyment are running also to waste, and are everywhere burning out unexercised—waste, in short, in the world of things *enjoyable*, balanced by an equal waste in the organs and the machineries of enjoyment! This picture—would it not fret the heart of an Englishman?

from certain schools were absolute; in some, I believe, conditional; in others, again, concurrent with rival claims from favoured schools or favoured counties.

Some years (say twenty) after the era of my own entrance at that Oxford which then furnished me with records so painful of slight regard to our national literature, behold at the court of London a French ambassador, a man of genius blazing (as some people thought) with nationality, but, in fact, with something inexpressibly nobler and deeper—viz. patriotism. For true and unaffected patriotism will show its love in a noble form by sincerity and truth. But nationality, as I have always found, is mean; is dishonest; is ungenerous; is incapable of candour; and, being continually besieged with temptations to falsehood, too often ends by becoming habitually mendacious. This Frenchman above all things valued literature: his own trophies of distinction were all won upon that field: and yet, when called upon to review the literature of Europe, he found himself conscientiously coerced into making his work a mere monument to the glory of one man, and that man the son of a hostile land. The name of Milton, in *his* estimate, swallowed up all others. This Frenchman was Chateaubriand. The personal splendour which surrounded him gave a corresponding splendour to his act. And, because he, as an ambassador, was a representative man, this act might be interpreted as a representative act. The tutelary genius of France in this instance might be regarded as bending before that of England. But homage so free, homage so noble, must be interpreted and received in a corresponding spirit of generosity. It was not, like the testimony of Balaam on behalf of Israel, an unwilling submission to a hateful truth . it was a concession, in the spirit of saintly magnanimity, to an interest of human nature that, *as* such, transcended by many degrees all considerations merely national.

Now, then, with this unlimited devotion to one great luminary of our literary system emblazoned so conspicuously in the testimony of a Frenchman—that is, of one trained, and privileged to be a public enemy—contrast the humiliating spectacle of young Englishmen suffered (so far as their training is concerned) to ignore the very existence of this mighty poet. Do I mean, then, that it would have been advisable to place the "Paradise Lost," and the "Paradise Regained," and the "Samson," in the library of schoolboys? By no

means. That mode of sensibility which deals with the Miltonic sublimity is rarely developed in boyhood. And these divine works should in prudence be reserved to the period of mature manhood. But then it should be made known that they *are* so reserved, and upon what principle of reverential regard for the poet himself. In the meantime, selections from Milton, from Dryden, from Pope, and many other writers, though not everywhere appreciable by those who have but small experience of life, would not generally transcend the intellect or sensibility of a boy sixteen or seventeen years old. And, beyond all other sections of literature, the two which I am going to mention are fitted (or might be fitted by skilful management) to engage the interest of those who are no longer boys, but have reached the age which is presumable in English university matriculation—viz. the close of the eighteenth year. Search through all languages, from Benares the mystical, and the banks of the Ganges, travelling westwards to the fountains of the Hudson, I deny that any two such *bibliothecæ* for engaging youthful interest could be brought together as these two which follow:—

First, In contradiction to M. Cousin's recent audacious assertion (redeemed from the suspicion of mendacity simply by the extremity of ignorance on which it reposes) that we English have no tolerable writer of prose subsequent to Lord Bacon, it so happens that the seventeenth century, and specially that part of it concerned in this case—viz. the latter seventy years (A.D. 1628-1700)—produced the highest efforts of eloquence (philosophic, but at the same time rhetorical and impassioned, in a degree unknown to the prose literature of France) which our literature possesses, and not a line of it but is posterior to the death of Lord Bacon. Donne, Chillingworth, Sir Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor, Milton, South, Barrow, form a *pleïad*, a constellation of seven golden stars, such as no literature can match in their own class. From these seven writers, taken apart from all their contemporaries, I would undertake to build up an entire body of philosophy [1] upon the supreme interests of humanity. One

[1] "*Philosophy*":—At this point it is that the main misconception would arise. Theology, and not philosophy, most people will fancy, is

error of M. Cousin's doubtless lay in overlooking the fact that all conceivable problems of philosophy can reproduce themselves under a theological mask: and thus he had absolved himself from reading many English books, as presumably mere professional pleadings of Protestant polemics, which are in fact mines inexhaustible of eloquence and philosophic speculation.

Secondly, A full abstract of the English Drama from about the year 1580 to the period (say 1635) at which it was killed by the frost of the Puritanical spirit seasoning all flesh for the Parliamentary War. No literature, not excepting even that of Athens, has ever presented such a multiform theatre, such a carnival display, mask and anti-mask, of impassioned life—breathing, moving, acting, suffering, laughing.

> "Quicquid agunt homines—votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
> Gaudia, discursus";[1]

—all this, but far more truly and adequately than was or could be effected in that field of composition which the gloomy satirist contemplated,—whatsoever in fact our mediæval ancestors exhibited in their "Dance of Death," drunk with tears and laughter,—may here be reviewed, scenically grouped, draped, and gorgeously coloured. What other national drama can pretend to any competition with this? The Athenian has in a great proportion perished; the Roman was killed prematurely by the bloody realities of the amphitheatre, as candle-light by day-light; the Spanish, even in the hands of Calderon, offers only undeveloped sketchings; and the French, besides other and profounder objections, to which no justice had yet been done, lies under the signal disadvantage of not having reached its meridian until sixty

likely to form the staple of these writers. But I have elsewhere maintained that the main bulk of English philosophy has always hidden itself in the English divinity. In Jeremy Taylor, for instance, are exhibited all the *practical* aspects of philosophy; of philosophy as it bears upon Life, upon Ethics, and upon Transcendent Prudence—*i.e.*, briefly upon the Greek *summum bonum*.

[1] "All that is done by men—movements of prayer, panic, wrath, revels of the voluptuous, festivals of triumph, or gladiatorship of the intellect."—*Juvenal*, in the prefatory lines which rehearse the prevailing themes of his own Satires gathered in the great harvests of Rome.

years (or two generations) after the English. In reality, the great period of the English Drama was exactly closing as the French opened [1]: consequently the French lost the prodigious advantage for scenical effects of a romantic and picturesque age. This had vanished when the French theatre culminated; and the natural result was that the fastidiousness of French taste, by this time too powerfully developed, stifled or distorted the free movements of French genius.

I beg the reader's pardon for this disproportioned digression, into which I was hurried by my love for our great national literature, my anxiety to see it amongst educational resources invested with a ministerial agency of far ampler character, but at all events to lodge a protest against that wholesale neglect of our supreme authors which leaves us open to the stinging reproach of "treading daily with our clouted shoon" (to borrow the words of Comus) upon that which high-minded foreigners regard as the one paramount jewel in our national diadem.

That reproach fell heavily, as my own limited experience inclined me to fear, upon most of our great public schools, otherwise so admirably conducted.[2] But from the Man-

[1] It is remarkable that in the period immediately anterior to that of Corneille, a stronger and more *living* nature was struggling for utterance in French tragedy. Guizot has cited from an early drama (I forget whether of Rotrou or of Hardy) one scene most thoroughly impassioned. The situation is that of a prince who has fixed his love upon a girl of low birth. She is faithful and constant: but the courtiers about the prince, for malicious purposes of their own, calumniate her: the prince is deluded by the plausible air of the slanders which they disperse: he believes them; but not with the result (anticipated by the courtiers) of dismissing the girl from his thoughts. On the contrary, he is haunted all the more morbidly by her image; and, in a scene which brings before us one of the vilest amongst these slanderers exerting himself to the uttermost in drawing off the prince's thoughts to alien objects, we find the prince vainly attempting any self-control, vainly striving to attend, till he is overruled by the tenderness of his sorrowing love into finding new occasions for awakening thoughts of the lost girl in the very words chiefly relied on for calling off his feelings from her image. The scene (as Guizot himself remarks) is thoroughly Shaksperian; and I venture to think that this judgment would have been countersigned by Charles Lamb.

[2] It will strike everybody that such works as the "Microcosm," conducted notoriously by Eton boys, and therefore, in part, by Canning

chester Grammar School any such reproach altogether rebounded. My very first conversation with the boys had arisen naturally upon a casual topic, and had shown them to be tolerably familiar with the outline of the Christian polemics in the warfare with Jew, Mahometan, Infidel, and Sceptic. But this was an exceptional case; and naturally it happened that most of us sought for the ordinary subjects of our conversational discussions in literature—viz. in our own native literature. Here it was that I learned to feel a deep respect for my new school-fellows: deep it was, then; and a larger experience has made it deeper. I have since known many literary men; men whose profession was literature; who were understood to have dedicated themselves to literature; and who sometimes had with some one special section or little nook of literature an acquaintance critically minute. But amongst such men I have found but three or four who had a knowledge which came as near to what I should consider a comprehensive knowledge as really existed amongst those boys collectively. What one boy had not, another had; and thus, by continual intercourse, the fragmentary contribution of one being integrated by the fragmentary contributions of others, gradually the attainments of each separate individual became, in some degree, the collective attainments of the whole senior common room. It is true, undoubtedly, that some parts of literature were inaccessible, simply because the books were inaccessible to boys at school,—for instance, Froissart in the old translation by Lord Berners, now more than three centuries old; and some parts were, to the young, essentially repulsive. But, measuring the general qualifications by that standard which I have since found to prevail amongst professional *litterateurs*, I felt more respectfully towards the majority of my senior school-fellows than ever I had fancied it possible that I should find occasion to feel towards any boys whatever. My intercourse with those amongst them who had any conversational talents greatly stimulated my intellect.

as one of their leaders at that period, must have an admirable effect, since not only it must have made it the interest of each contributor, but must even have made it his necessity, to cultivate some acquaintance with his native literature.

This intercourse, however, fell within narrower limits soon after the time of my entrance. I acknowledge, with deep self-reproach, that every possible indulgence was allowed to me which the circumstances of the establishment made possible. I had, for example, a private room allowed, in which I not only studied, but also slept at night. The room being airy and cheerful, I found nothing disagreeable in this double use of it. Naturally, however, this means of retirement tended to sequester me from my companions: for, whilst liking the society of some amongst them, I also had a deadly liking (perhaps a morbid liking) for solitude. To make my present solitude the more fascinating, my mother sent me five guineas *extra*, for the purchase of an admission to the Manchester Library; a library which I should not at present think *very* extensive, but which, however, benefited in its composition, as also in its administration, by the good sense and intelligence of some amongst its original committees. These two luxuries were truly and indeed such: but a third, from which I had anticipated even greater pleasure, turned out a total failure; and for a reason which it may be useful to mention, by way of caution to others. This was a pianoforte, together with the sum required for regular lessons from a music-master. But the first discovery I made was that practice through eight or even ten hours a-day was indispensable towards any great proficiency on this instrument. Another discovery finished my disenchantment: it was this. For the particular purpose which I had in view, it became clear that no mastery of the instrument, not even that of Thalberg, would be available. Too soon I became aware that to the deep voluptuous enjoyment of music absolute *passiveness* in the hearer is indispensable. Gain what skill you please, nevertheless activity, vigilance, anxiety must always accompany an elaborate effort of musical execution: and so far is that from being reconcilable with the entrancement and lull essential to the true fruition of music, that, even if you should suppose a vast piece of mechanism capable of executing a whole oratorio, but requiring, at intervals, a co-operating impulse from the foot of the auditor, even *that*, even so much as an occasional touch of the foot, would utterly undermine all your pleasure. A single psychological dis-

covery, therefore, caused my musical anticipations to evanesce. Consequently, one of my luxuries burst like a bubble at an early stage. In this state of things, when the instrument had turned out a bubble, it followed naturally that the music-master should find himself to be a bubble. But he was so thoroughly good-natured and agreeable that I could not reconcile myself to such a catastrophe. Meantime, though accommodating within certain limits, this music-master was yet a conscientious man, and a man of honourable pride. On finding, therefore, that I was not seriously making any effort to improve, he shook hands with me one fine day, and took his leave for ever. Unless it were to point a moral and adorn a tale, the piano had then become useless. It was too big to hang upon willows, and willows there were none in that neighbourhood. But it remained for months as a lumbering monument of labour misapplied, of bubbles that had burst, and of musical visions that, under psychological tests, had foundered for ever.

Yes, certainly, this particular luxury—one out of three—had proved a bubble; too surely this had foundered; but not, therefore, the other two. The quiet study, lifted by two storeys above the vapours of earth, and liable to no unseasonable intrusion; the Manchester Library, so judiciously and symmetrically mounted in all its most attractive departments—no class disproportioned to the rest: these were no bubbles; these had not foundered. Oh, wherefore, then, was it—through what inexplicable growth of evil in myself or in others—that now in the summer of 1802, when peace was brooding over all the land, peace succeeding to a bloody seven years' war, but peace which already gave signs of breaking into a far bloodier war, some dark sympathising movement within my own heart, as if echoing and repeating in mimicry the political menaces of the earth, swept with storm-clouds across that otherwise serene and radiant dawn which should have heralded my approaching entrance into life? *Inexplicable* I have allowed myself to call this fatal error in my life, because such it *must* appear to others; since, even to myself, so often as I fail to realise the case by reproducing a reflex impression in kind, and in degree, of the suffering before which my better angel gave way—yes, even

to myself this collapse of my resisting energies seems inexplicable. Yet again, in simple truth, now that it becomes possible, through changes worked by time, to tell the *whole* truth (and not, as in former editions, only a part of it), there really was no absolute mystery at all. But this case, in common with many others, exemplifies to my mind the mere impossibility of making full and frank "Confessions," whilst many of the persons concerned in the incidents are themselves surviving, or (which is worse still), if themselves dead and buried, are yet vicariously surviving in the persons of near and loving kinsmen. Rather than inflict mortifications upon people so circumstanced, any kindhearted man will choose to mutilate his narrative; will suppress facts, and will mystify explanations. For instance, at this point in my record, it has become my right, perhaps I might say my duty, to call a particular medical man of the penultimate generation a blockhead; nay, doubtfully, to call him a criminal blockhead. But could I do this without deep compunction, so long as sons and daughters of his were still living, from whom I, when a boy, had received most hospitable attentions? Often, on the very same day which brought home to my suffering convictions the atrocious ignorance of papa, I was benefiting by the courtesies of the daughters, and by the scientific accomplishments of the son. Not the less this man, at that particular moment when a crisis of gloom was gathering over my path, became effectually my evil genius. Not that singly perhaps he could have worked any durable amount of mischief: but he, as a co-operator unconsciously with others, sealed and ratified that sentence of stormy sorrow then hanging over my head. Three separate persons, in fact, made themselves unintentional accomplices in that ruin (a ruin reaching me even at this day by its shadows) which threw me out a homeless vagrant upon the earth before I had accomplished my seventeenth year. Of these three persons, foremost came myself, through my wilful despair and resolute adjuration of all *secondary* hope: since, after all, some mitigation was possible, supposing that perfect relief might *not* be possible. Secondly, came that medical ruffian through whose brutal ignorance it happened that my malady had not been arrested before reaching an advanced

stage. Thirdly, came Mr. Lawson, through whose growing infirmities it had arisen that this malady ever reached its very earliest stage. Strange it was, but not the less a fact, that Mr. Lawson was gradually becoming a curse to all who fell under his influence, through pure zealotry of conscientiousness. Being a worse man, he would have carried far deeper blessings into his circle. If he could have reconciled himself to an imperfect discharge of his duties, he would not have betrayed his insufficiency for those duties. But this he would not hear of. He persisted in travelling over the appointed course to the last inch: and the consequences told most painfully upon the comfort of all around him. By the old traditionary usages of the school, going in at seven A.M., we ought to have been dismissed for breakfast and a full hour's repose at nine. This hour of rest was in strict justice a *debt* to the students—liable to no discount either through the caprice or the tardiness of the supreme master. Yet such were the gradual encroachments upon this hour that at length the bells of the collegiate church,—which, by an ancient usage, rang every morning from half-past nine to ten, and through varying modifications of musical key and *rhythmus* that marked the advancing stages of the half-hour,—regularly announced to us, on issuing from the school-room, that the bread and milk which composed our simple breakfast must be despatched at a pace fitter for the fowls of the air than students of Grecian philosophy. But was no compensatory encroachment for our benefit allowed upon the next hour from ten to eleven? Not for so much as the fraction of a second. Inexorably as the bells, by stopping, announced the hour of ten, was Mr. Lawson to be seen ascending the steps of the school; and he that suffered most by this rigorous exaction of duties could not allege that Mr. Lawson suffered less. If he required others to pay, he also paid up to the last farthing. The same derangement took place, with the same refusal to benefit by any indemnification, at what *should* have been the two-hours' pause for dinner. Only for some mysterious reason, resting possibly upon the family arrangements of the day-scholars,—which, if once violated, might have provoked a rebellion of fathers and mothers,—he still adhered faithfully to five o'clock P.M. as the closing hour of the day's labours.

Here then stood arrayed the whole machinery of mischief in good working order; and through six months or more, allowing for one short respite of four weeks, this machinery had been operating with effect. Mr. Lawson, to begin, had (without meaning it, or so much as perceiving it) barred up all avenues from morning to night through which any bodily exercise could be obtained. Two or three chance intervals of five minutes each, and even these not consecutively arranged, composed the whole available fund of leisure out of which any stroll into the country could have been attempted. But in a great city like Manchester the very suburbs had hardly been reached before that little fraction of time was exhausted. Very soon after Mr. Lawson's increasing infirmities had begun to tell severely in the contraction of our spare time, the change showed itself powerfully in my drooping health. Gradually the liver became affected: and connected with that affection arose, what often accompanies such ailments, profound melancholy. In such circumstances, indeed under any the slightest disturbance of my health, I had authority from my guardians to call for medical advice: but I was not left to my own discretion in selecting the adviser. This person was not a physician, who would of course have expected the ordinary fee of a guinea for every visit; nor a surgeon; but simply an apothecary. In any case of serious illness a physician would have been called in. But a less costly style of advice was reasonably held to be sufficient in any illness which left the patient strength sufficient to walk about. Certainly it ought to have been sufficient here: for no case could possibly be simpler. Three doses of calomel or blue pill, which unhappily I did not then know, would no doubt have re-established me in a week. But far better, as acting always upon me with a magical celerity and a magical certainty, would have been the authoritative prescription (privately notified to Mr. Lawson) of seventy miles' walking in each week. Unhappily my professional adviser was a comatose old gentleman, rich beyond all his needs, careless of his own practice, and standing under that painful necessity (according to the custom then regulating medical practice, which prohibited fees to apothecaries) of seeking his remuneration in excessive

deluges of medicine. Me, however, out of pure idleness, he forbore to plague with any *variety* of medicines. With sublime simplicity he confined himself to one horrid mixture, that must have suggested itself to him when prescribing for a tiger. In ordinary circumstances, and with plenty of exercise, no creature could be healthier than myself. But my organisation was perilously frail. And to fight simultaneously with such a malady and such a medicine seemed really too much. The proverb tells us that three "flittings" are as bad as a fire. Very possibly. And I should think that, in the same spirit of reasonable equation, three such tiger-drenches must be equal to one apoplectic fit, or even to the tiger himself. Having taken two of them, which struck me as quite enough for one life, I declined to comply with the injunction of the label pasted upon each several phial—viz. *Repetatur haustus*[1]; and, instead of doing any such dangerous thing, called upon Mr. —— (the apothecary), beggoing to know if his art had not amongst its reputed infinity of resources any less abominable, and less shattering to a delicate system than this. "None whatever," he replied. Exceedingly kind he was; insisted on my drinking tea with his really amiable daughters; but continued at intervals to repeat "None whatever—none whatever"; then, as if rousing himself to an effort, he sang out loudly "None whatever," which in this final utterance he toned down syllabically into "what*ever—ever—ver—er*." The whole wit of man, it seems, had exhausted itself upon the preparation of that one infernal mixture.

Now then we three—Mr. Lawson, the somnolent apothecary, and myself—had amongst us accomplished a climax of perplexity. Mr. Lawson, by mere dint of conscientiousness, had made health for me impossible. The apothecary had subscribed *his* little contribution, by ratifying and trebling the ruinous effects of this sedentariness. And for myself, as last in the series, it now remained to clench the operation by my own little contribution, all that I really had to offer—viz. absolute despair. Those who have ever suffered from a profound derangement of the liver may happen to know that of human despondencies through all their infinite gamut

[1] "Let the draught be repeated."

none is more deadly. Hope died within me. I could not look for medical relief, so deep being my own ignorance, so equally deep being that of my official counsellor. I could not expect that Mr. Lawson would modify his system—his instincts of duty being so strong, his incapacity to face that duty so steadily increasing. "It comes then to this," thought I, "that in myself only there lurks any arrear of help": as always for every man the ultimate reliance should be on himself. But this *self* of mine seemed absolutely bankrupt; bankrupt of counsel or device—of effort in the way of action, or of suggestion in the way of plan. I had for two months been pursuing with one of my guardians what I meant for a negotiation upon this subject; the main object being to obtain some considerable abbreviation of my school residence. But *negotiation* was a self-flattering name for such a correspondence, since there never had been from the beginning any the slightest leaning on my guardian's part towards the shadow or pretence of a compromise. What compromise, indeed, was possible where neither party could concede a *part*, however small: the *whole* must be conceded, or nothing: since no *mezzo termine* was conceivable. In reality, when my eyes first glanced upon that disagreeable truth—that no opening offered for *reciprocal* concession, that the concession must all be on one side—naturally it struck me that no guardian could be expected to do *that*. At the same moment it also struck me that my guardian had all along never for a moment been arguing with a view to any *practical* result, but simply in the hope that he might win over my assent to the reasonableness of what, reasonable or not, was settled immoveably. These sudden discoveries, flashing upon me simultaneously, were quite sufficient to put a summary close to the correspondence. And I saw also, which strangely had escaped me till this general revelation of disappointments, that any individual guardian—even if he *had* been disposed to concession—was but one after all amongst five. Well: this amongst the general blackness really brought a gleam of comfort. If the whole object on which I had spent so much excellent paper and midnight tallow (I am ashamed to use so vile a word, and yet truth forbids me to say *oil*), if this would have been so nearly worthless when gained, then it

became a kind of pleasure to have lost it. All considerations united now in urging me to waste no more of either rhetoric, tallow, or logic, upon my impassive granite block of a guardian. Indeed, I suspected, on reviewing his last communication, that he had just reached the last inch of his patience, or (in nautical diction) had "paid out" the entire cable by which he swung; so that, if I, acting on the apothecary's precedent of "*repetatur haustus*," had endeavoured to administer another bolus or draught of expostulation, he would have followed my course as to the tiger-drench, in applying his potential *No* to any such audacious attempt. To my guardian, meantime, I owe this justice—that, over and above the absence on my side of any arguments wearing even a colourable strength (for to him the suffering from biliousness must have been a mere word), he had the following weighty consideration to offer, "which even this foolish boy" (to himself he would say) "will think material some three years ahead." My patrimonial income, at the moment of my father's death, like that of all my brothers (then three), was exactly £150 per annum.[1] Now, according to the current belief, or boldly, one might say, according to the avowed traditional maxim throughout England, such an income was too little for an under-graduate, keeping his four terms annually at Oxford or Cambridge. Too little—by how much? By £50: the adequate income being set down at just £200. Consequently the precise sum by which my income was supposed (falsely supposed, as subsequently my own experience convinced me) to fall short of the income needed for Oxford,[2] was that very sum which the funds of the Manchester Grammar School allocated to every student resident for a period of three years; and allocated not merely through a corresponding period of three years, but of seven years. Strong should have been the reasons that could neutralise such overwhelming pleadings of just and

[1] "£150 *per annum*":—Why in a long minority of more than fourteen years this was not improved, I never could learn. Nobody was open to any suspicion of positive embezzlement: and yet this case must be added to the other cases of passive neglects and negative injuries which so extensively disfigure the representative picture of guardianship all over Christendom.

[2] See De Quincey's paper on Oxford, *ante*, vol. ii.—M.

honourable prudence for submitting to the further residence required. O reader, urge not the crying arguments that spoke so tumultuously against me. Too sorrowfully I feel them. Out of thirty-six months' residence required, I had actually completed nineteen—*i.e.* the better half. Still, on the other hand, it is true that my sufferings were almost insupportable; and, but for the blind unconscious conspiracy of two persons, these sufferings would either (1) never have existed, or (2) would have been instantly relieved. In a great city like Manchester lay, probably, a ship-load of that same mercury which, by one fragment, not so large as an acorn, would have changed the colour of a human life, or would have intercepted the heavy funeral knell—heavy, though it may be partially muffled—of his own fierce self-reproaches.

But now, at last, came over me, from the mere excess of bodily suffering and mental disappointments, a frantic and rapturous re-agency. In the United States the case is well known, and many times has been described by travellers, of that furious instinct which, under a secret call for saline variations of diet, drives all the tribes of buffaloes for thousands of miles to the common centre of the "Salt-licks." Under such a compulsion does the locust, under such a compulsion does the leeming, traverse its mysterious path. They are deaf to danger, deaf to the cry of battle, deaf to the trumpets of death. Let the sea cross their path, let armies with artillery bar the road, even these terrific powers can arrest only by destroying; and the most frightful abysses, up to the very last menace of engulfment, up to the very instant of absorption, have no power to alter or retard the line of their inexorable advance.

Such an instinct it was, such a rapturous command—even so potent, and alas! even so blind—that, under the whirl of tumultuous indignation and of new-born hope, suddenly transfigured my whole being. In the twinkling of an eye, I came to an adamantine resolution—not as if issuing from any act or any choice of my own, but as if passively received from some dark oracular legislation external to myself. That I would elope from Manchester—this was the resolution. *Abscond* would have been the word, if I had meditated any-

thing criminal. But whence came the indignation, and the hope? The indignation arose naturally against my three tormentors (guardian, Archididascalus, and the professor of tigrology); for those who *do* substantially co-operate to one result, however little designing it, unavoidably the mind unifies as a hostile confederacy. But the hope—how shall I explain *that?* Was it the first-born of the resolution, or was the resolution the first-born of the hope? Indivisibly they went together, like thunder and lightning; or each interchangeably ran before and after the other. Under that transcendent rapture which the prospect of sudden liberation let loose, all that natural anxiety which should otherwise have interlinked itself with my anticipations was actually drowned in the blaze of joy, as the light of the planet Mercury is lost and confounded on sinking too far within the blaze of the solar beams. Practically I felt no care at all stretching beyond two or three weeks. Not as being heedless and improvident; my tendencies lay generally in the other direction. No; the cause lurked in what Wordsworth, when describing the festal state of France during the happy morning-tide of her First Revolution (1788-1790), calls "*the senselessness of joy*": this it was, joy—headlong—frantic—irreflective—and (as Wordsworth truly calls it), for that very reason, *sublime*[1]—which swallowed up all capacities of rankling care or heart-corroding doubt. I was, I had been long, a captive: I was in a house of bondage: one fulminating word—*Let there be freedom*—spoken from some hidden recess in my own will, had as by an earthquake rent asunder my prison gates. At any minute I could walk out. Already I trod by anticipation the sweet pastoral hills, already I breathed gales of the everlasting mountains, that to my feelings blew from the garden of Paradise; and in that vestibule of an earthly heaven it was no more possible for me to see vividly or in any lingering detail the thorny cares which might hereafter multiply around me than amongst the roses of June, and on the loveliest of June mornings, I could gather depression from the glooms of the last December.

[1] "The senselessness of joy was then sublime."—Wordsworth at Calais in 1802 (see his sonnets), looking back through thirteen years to the great era of social resurrection, in 1788-89, from a sleep of ten centuries.

To go was settled. But *when* and *whither?* *When* could have but one answer; for on more reasons than one I needed summer weather, and as much of it as possible. Besides that, when August came, it would bring along with it my own birth-day: now, one codicil in my general vow of freedom had been that my seventeenth birth-day should not find me at school. Still I needed some trifle of preparation. Especially I needed a little money. I wrote, therefore, to the only confidential friend that I had—viz. Lady Carbery. Originally, as early friends of my mother's, both she and Lord Carbery had distinguished me at Bath and elsewhere, for some years, by flattering attentions; and, for the last three years in particular, Lady Carbery, a young woman some ten years older than myself, and who was as remarkable for her intellectual pretensions as she was for her beauty and her benevolence, had maintained a correspondence with me upon questions of literature. She thought too highly of my powers and attainments, and everywhere spoke of me with an enthusiasm that, if I had been five or six years older, and had possessed any personal advantages, might have raised smiles at her expense.[1] To her I now wrote, requesting the loan of five guineas. A whole week passed without any answer. This perplexed and made me uneasy: for her ladyship was rich by a vast fortune removed entirely from her husband's control; and, as I felt assured, would have cheerfully sent me twenty times the sum asked, unless her sagacity had suggested some suspicion (which seemed impossible) of the real purposes which I contemplated in the employment of the five guineas. Could I incautiously have said anything in my own letter tending that way? Certainly not; then why—— But at that moment my speculations were cut short by a letter bearing a coroneted seal. It was from Lady Carbery, of course, and enclosed ten guineas instead of five. Slow in those days were the mails; besides which, Lady Carbery happened to be down at the seaside, whither my letter had been sent after her. Now, then, including my own pocket-money, I possessed a dozen guineas; which seemed sufficient for my immediate purpose; and all ulterior emergencies, as the reader understands, I trampled

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 329 and pp. 332-377.—M.

under foot. This sum, however, spent at inns on the most economic footing, could not have held out for much above a calendar month; and, as to the plan of selecting secondary inns, these are not always cheaper; but the main objection is that in the solitary stations amongst the mountains (Cambrian no less than Cumbrian) there is often no choice to be found: the high-priced inn is the only one. Even this dozen of guineas it became necessary to diminish by three. The age of "vails" and perquisites to three or four servants at any gentleman's house where you dined—this age, it is true, had passed away by thirty years perhaps. But that flagrant abuse had no connexion at all with the English custom of distributing money amongst that part of the domestics whose daily labours may have been increased by a visitor's residence in the family for some considerable space of time. This custom (almost peculiar, I believe, to the English gentry) is honourable and just. I personally had been trained by my mother, who detested sordid habits, to look upon it as ignominious in a gentleman to leave a household without acknowledging the obliging services of those who cannot openly remind him of their claims. On this occasion, mere necessity compelled me to overlook the housekeeper: for to her I could not have offered less than two or three guineas; and, as she was a fixture, I reflected that I might send it at some future period. To three inferior servants I found that I ought not to give less than one guinea each: so much, therefore, I left in the hands of G——, the most honourable and upright of boys; since to have given it myself would have been prematurely to publish my purpose. These three guineas deducted, I still had nine, or thereabouts. And now all things were settled, except one: the *when* was settled, and the *how;* but not the *whither.* That was still *sub judice.*

My plan originally had been to travel northwards—viz. to the region of the English Lakes. That little mountainous district, lying stretched like a pavilion between four well-known points,—viz. the small towns of Ulverstone and Penrith as its two poles, south and north; between Kendal, again, on the east, and Egremont on the west,—measuring on the one diameter about forty miles, and on the other perhaps thirty-

five—had for me a secret fascination, subtle, sweet, fantastic, and even from my seventh or eighth year spiritually strong. The southern section of that district, about eighteen or twenty miles long, which bears the name of Furness, figures in the eccentric geography of English law as a section of Lancashire, though separated from that county by the estuary of Morecambe Bay: and therefore, as Lancashire happened to be my own native county, I had from childhood, on the strength of this mere legal fiction, cherished as a mystic privilege, slender as a filament of air, some fraction of denizenship in the fairy little domain of the English Lakes. The major part of these lakes lies in Westmoreland and Cumberland: but the sweet reposing little water of Esthwaite, with its few emerald fields, and the grander one of Coniston, with the sublime cluster of mountain groups, and the little network of quiet dells lurking about its head[1] all the way back to Grasmere, lie in or near the upper chamber of Furness; and all these, together with the ruins of the once glorious abbey, had been brought out not many years before into sunny splendour by the great enchantress of that generation—Anne Radcliffe. But more even than Anne Radcliffe had the landscape painters, so many and so various, contributed to

[1] "*Its head*":—That end of a lake which receives the rivulets and brooks feeding its waters is locally called its *head;* and, in continuation of the same constructive image, the counter terminus, which discharges its surplus water, is called its *foot.* By the way, as a suggestion from this obvious distinction, I may remark that in all cases the very existence of a head and a foot to any sheet of water defeats the malice of Lord Byron's sneer against the lake poets, in calling them by the contemptuous designation of "*pond* poets"; a variation which some part of the public readily caught up as a natural reverberation of that spitefulness, so petty and apparently so groundless, which notoriously Lord Byron cherished against Wordsworth steadily, and more fitfully against Southey. The effect of transforming a living image—an image of restless motion—into an image of foul stagnation was tangibly apprehensible. But what was it that contradistinguished the "*vivi lacus*" of Virgil from rotting ponds mantled with verdant slime? To have, or *not* to have, a head and a foot (*i.e.*, a principle of perpetual change) is at the very heart of this distinction; and to substitute for *lake* a term which ignores and negatives the very differential principle that constitutes a lake—viz., its current and its eternal mobility—is to offer an insult in which the insulted party has no interest or concern.

the glorification of the English lake district; drawing out and impressing upon the heart the sanctity of repose in its shy recesses—its alpine grandeurs in such passes as those of Wastdale-head, Langdale-head, Borrowdale, Kirkstone, Hawsdale, &c., together with the monastic peace which seems to brood over its peculiar form of pastoral life, so much nobler (as Wordsworth notices) in its stern simplicity and continual conflict with danger hidden in the vast draperies of mist overshadowing the hills, and amongst the armies of snow and hail arrayed by fierce northern winters, than the effeminate shepherd's life in the classical Arcadia, or in the flowery pastures of Sicily.

Amongst these attractions that drew me so strongly to the Lakes, there had also by that time arisen in this lovely region the deep deep magnet (as to me *only* in all this world it then was) of William Wordsworth. Inevitably this close connexion of the poetry which most of all had moved me with the particular region and scenery that most of all had fastened upon my affections, and led captive my imagination, was calculated, under ordinary circumstances, to impress upon my fluctuating deliberations a summary and decisive bias. But the very depth of the impressions which had been made upon me, either as regarded the poetry or the scenery, was too solemn and (unaffectedly I may say it) too spiritual, to clothe itself in any hasty or chance movement as at all adequately expressing its strength, or reflecting its hallowed character. If you, reader, were a devout Mahometan, throwing gazes of mystical awe daily towards Mecca, or were a Christian devotee looking with the same rapt adoration to St. Peter's at Rome, or to El Kodah, the Holy City of Jerusalem (so called even amongst the Arabs, who hate both Christian and Jew),—how painfully would it jar upon your sensibilities if some friend, sweeping past you upon a high road, with a train (according to the circumstances) of dromedaries or of wheel carriages, should suddenly pull up, and say, "Come, old fellow, jump up alongside of me; I'm off for the Red Sea, and here's a spare dromedary," or "Off for Rome, and here's a well-cushioned barouche." Seasonable and convenient it might happen that the invitation were; but still it would shock you that a journey which, with or without your con-

sent, could not *but* assume the character eventually of a saintly pilgrimage, should arise and take its initial movement upon a casual summons, or upon a vulgar opening of momentary convenience. In the present case, under no circumstances should I have dreamed of presenting myself to Wordsworth. The principle of "veneration" (to speak phrenologically) was by many degrees too strong in me for any such overture on my part. Hardly could I have found the courage to meet and to answer such an overture coming from *him*. I could not even tolerate the prospect (as a bare possibility) of Wordsworth's hearing my name first of all associated with some case of pecuniary embarrassment. And, apart from all *that*, it vulgarised the whole "interest" (no other term can I find to express the case collectively)—the whole "interest" of poetry and the enchanted land—equally it vulgarised person and thing, the vineyard and the vintage, the gardens and the ladies, of the Hesperides, together with all their golden fruitage, if I should rush upon them in a hurried and thoughtless state of excitement. I remembered the fine caution on this subject involved in a tradition preserved by Pausanias. Those (he tells us) who visited by night the great field of Marathon (where at certain times phantom cavalry careered, flying and pursuing) in a temper of vulgar sight-seeking, and under no higher impulse than the degrading one of curiosity, were met and punished severely in the dark, by the same sort of people, I presume, as those who handled Falstaff so roughly in the venerable shades of Windsor: whilst loyal visitors, who came bringing a true and filial sympathy with the grand deeds of their Athenian ancestors, who came as children of the same hearth, met with the most gracious acceptance, and fulfilled all the purposes of a pilgrimage or sacred mission. Under my present circumstances, I saw that the very motives of love and honour, which would have inclined the scale so powerfully in favour of the northern lakes, were exactly those which drew most heavily in the other direction—the circumstances being what they were as to hurry and perplexity. And just at that moment suddenly unveiled itself another powerful motive against taking the northern direction—viz. consideration for my mother—which made my heart recoil

from giving her too great a shock; and in what other way could it be mitigated than by my personal presence in a case of emergency? For such a purpose North Wales would be the best haven to make for, since the road thither from my present home lay through Chester,—where at that time my mother had fixed her residence.

If I had hesitated (and hesitate I did very sincerely) about such a mode of expressing the consideration due to my mother, it was not from any want of decision in my feeling, but really because I feared to be taunted with this act of tenderness, as arguing an exaggerated estimate of my own importance in my mother's eyes. To be capable of causing any alarming shock, must I not suppose myself an object of special interest? No: I did not agree to that inference. But no matter. Better to stand ten thousand sneers than one abiding pang, such as time could not abolish, of bitter self-reproach. So I resolved to face this taunt without flinching, and to steer a course for St. John's Priory,—my mother's residence near Chester.[1] At the very instant of coming to this resolution, a singular accident occurred to confirm it. On the very day before my rash journey commenced, I received through the post-office a letter bearing this address in a foreign handwriting—*A Monsieur Monsieur de Quincy, Chester.* This iteration of the *Monsieur*, as a courteous French fashion[2] for effecting something equivalent to our own *Esquire*, was to me at that time an unintelligible novelty. The best way to explain it was to read the letter; which, to the extent of *mon possible*, I did, but vainly attempted to decipher. So much, however, I spelled out as satisfied me that the letter could not have been meant for myself. The post-mark was, I think, *Hamburgh:* but the date within was from some place in Normandy; and eventually it came out

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. pp. 400-416.—M.

[2] "*As a courteous French fashion*":—And not at all a modern fashion. That famous Countess of Derby (Charlotte de Tremouille) who presided in the defence of Lathom House (which, and not Knowsley, was then the capital domicile of the Stanleys), when addressing Prince Rupert, sometimes superscribes her envelope *A Monseigneur le Prince Rupert*, but sometimes *A Monsieur Monsieur le Prince Rupert.* This was in 1644, the year of Marston Moor, and the penultimate year of the Parliamentary War.

that the person addressed was a poor emigrant, some relative of Quatremére de Quincy,[1] who had come to Chester, probably as a teacher of French, and now in 1802 found his return to France made easy by the brief and hollow peace of Amiens. Such an obscure person was naturally unknown to any English post-office; and the letter had been forwarded to myself, as the oldest male member of a family at that time necessarily well known in Chester.

I was astonished to find myself translated by a touch of the pen not only into a *Monsieur*, but even into a self-multiplied *Monsieur;* or, speaking algebraically, into the square of Monsieur; having a chance at some future day of being perhaps cubed into Monsieur. From the letter, as I had hastily torn it open, out dropped a draft upon Smith, Payne, & Smith for somewhere about forty guineas. At this stage of the revelations opening upon me, it might be fancied that the interest of the case thickened: since undoubtedly, if this windfall could be seriously meant for myself, *and no mistake*, never descended upon the head of man, in the outset of a perilous adventure, aid more seasonable, nay, more melodramatically critical. But alas! my eye is quick to value the logic of evil chances. Prophet of evil I ever am to myself: forced for ever into sorrowful auguries that I have no power to hide from my own heart, no, not through one night's solitary dreams. In a moment I saw too plainly that I was not Monsieur. I might be *Monsieur*, but not *Monsieur to the second power*. Who indeed could be *my* debtor to the amount of forty guineas? If there really *was* such a person, why had he been so many years in liquidating his debt? How shameful to suffer me to enter upon my seventeenth year before he made known his debt, or even his amiable existence. Doubtless, in strict morals,

[1] "*De Quincy*":—The family of De Quincey, or Quincy, or Quincie (spelt of course, like all proper names, under the anarchy prevailing as to orthography until the last one hundred and fifty years, in every possible form open to human caprice), was originally Norwegian. Early in the eleventh century this family emigrated from Norway to the South; and since then it has thrown off three separate swarms—French, English, and Anglo-American—each of which writes the name with its own slight variations. A brief outline of their migrations will be found in the Appendix. [See Note there.—M.]

this dreadful procrastination could not be justified. Still, as the man was apparently testifying his penitence, and in the most practical form (viz. payment), I felt perfectly willing to grant him absolution for past sins, and a general release from all arrears, if any should remain, through all coming generations. But alas! the mere seasonableness of the remittance floored my hopes. A five-guinea debtor might have been a conceivable being: such a debtor might exist in the flesh: *him* I could believe in; but further my faith would not go; and, if the money were, after all, *bonâ fide* meant for myself, clearly it must come from the Fiend: in which case it became an open question whether I ought to take it. At this stage the case had become a Sphinx's riddle; and the solution, if any, must be sought in the letter. But, as to the letter, O heaven and earth! if the Sphinx of old conducted her intercourse with Oedipus by way of letter, and propounded her wicked questions through the post-office of Thebes, it strikes me that she needed only to have used French penmanship in order to baffle that fatal decipherer of riddles for ever and ever. At Bath, where the French emigrants mustered in great strength (six thousand, I have heard) during the three closing years of the last century, I, through my mother's acquaintance with several leading families amongst them, had gained a large experience of French caligraphy. From this experience I had learned that the French aristocracy still persisted (*did* persist at that period, 1797-1800) in a traditional contempt for all accomplishments of that class as clerkly and plebeian, fitted only (as Shakspere says, when recording similar prejudices amongst his own countrymen) to do "yeoman's service." One and all, they delegated the care of their spelling to *valets* and *femmes-de-chambre;* sometimes even those persons who scoured their blankets and counterpanes scoured their spelling—that is to say, their week-day spelling; but, as to their Sunday spelling, that superfine spelling which they reserved for their efforts in literature, this was consigned to the care of compositors. Letters written by the royal family of France in 1792-93 still survive, in the memoirs of Cléry and others amongst their most faithful servants, which display the utmost excess of ignorance as to grammar and orthography. Then, as to the penmanship, all seemed

to write the same hand, and with the same piece of most ancient wood, or venerable skewer; all alike scratching out stiff perpendicular letters, as if executed (I should say) with a pair of snuffers. I do not speak thus in any spirit of derision. Such accomplishments were *wilfully* neglected, and even ambitiously, as if in open proclamation of scorn for the arts by which humbler people oftentimes got their bread. And a man of rank would no more conceive himself dishonoured by any deficiencies in the snobbish accomplishments of penmanship, grammar, or correct orthography, than a gentleman amongst ourselves by inexpertness in the mystery of cleaning shoes, or of polishing furniture. The result, however, from this systematic and ostentatious neglect of caligraphy is oftentimes most perplexing to all who are called upon to decipher their MSS. It happens, indeed, that the product of this carelessness thus far differs: always it is coarse and inelegant, but sometimes (say in 1-20th of the cases) it becomes specially legible. Far otherwise was the case before me. Being greatly hurried on this my farewell day, I could not make out two consecutive sentences. Unfortunately, one-half of a sentence sufficed to show that the enclosure belonged to some needy Frenchman living in a country not his own, and struggling probably with the ordinary evils of such a condition—friendlessness and exile. Before the letter came into my hands, it had already suffered some days' delay. When I noticed this, I found my sympathy with the poor stranger naturally quickened. Already, and unavoidably, he had been suffering from the vexation of a letter delayed; but henceforth, and continually more so, he must be suffering from the anxieties of a letter gone astray. Throughout this farewell day I was unable to carve out any opportunity for going up to the Manchester Post-office; and, without a distinct explanation in my own person, exonerating myself, on the written acknowledgment of the post-office, from all farther responsibility, I was most reluctant to give up the letter. It is true that the necessity of committing a forgery (which crime in those days was punished inexorably with death) before the money could have been fraudulently appropriated would, *if made known to the public*, have acquitted any casual holder of the letter from

all suspicion of dishonest intentions. But the danger was that, during the suspense and progress of the case whilst awaiting its final settlement, ugly rumours should arise and cling to one's name amongst the many that would hear only a fragmentary version of the whole affair.

At length all was ready. Midsummer, like an army with banners, was moving through the heavens; already the longest day had passed; those arrangements, few and imperfect, through which I attempted some partial evasion of disagreeable contingencies likely to arise, had been finished: what more remained for me to do of things that I was able to do? None; and yet, though now at last free to move off, I lingered; lingered as under some sense of dim perplexity, or even of relenting love for the very captivity itself which I was making so violent an effort to abjure, but more intelligibly for all the external objects, living or inanimate, by which that captivity had been surrounded and gladdened. What I was hastening to desert, nevertheless I grieved to desert; and, but for the foreign letter, I might have long continued to loiter and procrastinate. That, however, through various and urgent motives which it suggested, quickened my movements; and the same hour which brought this letter into my hands witnessed my resolution (uttered *audibly* to myself in my study) that early on the next day I would take my departure. A day, therefore, had at length arrived, had somewhat suddenly arrived, which would be the last, the very last, on which I should make my appearance in the school.

It is a just and a feeling remark of Dr. Johnson's that we never do anything consciously for the last time (of things, that is to say, which we have been long in the habit of doing) without sadness of heart. The secret sense of a farewell or testamentary act I carried along with me into every word or deed of this memorable day. Agent or patient, singly or one of a crowd, I heard for ever some sullen echo of valediction in every change, casual or periodic, that varied the revolving hours from morning to night. Most of all I felt this valedictory sound as a pathetic appeal when the closing hour of five P.M. brought with it the solemn evening service of the English Church—read by Mr. Lawson; read

now, as always, under a reverential stillness of the entire school. Already in itself, without the solemnity of prayers, the decaying light of the dying day suggests a mood of pensive and sympathetic sadness. And, if the changes in the light are less impressively made known so early as five o'clock in the depth of summer-tide, not the less we are sensible of being as near to the hours of repose, and to the secret dangers of the night, as if the season were mid-winter. Even thus far there was something that oftentimes had profoundly impressed me in this evening liturgy, and its special prayer against the perils of darkness. But greatly was that effect deepened by the symbolic treatment which this liturgy gives to this darkness and to these perils. Naturally, when contemplating that treatment, I had been led vividly to feel the memorable *rhabdomancy*[1] or magical power of evocation

[1] "*Rhabdomancy*":—The Greek word *manteia* (μαντεία), represented by the English form *mancy*, constitutes the stationary element in a large family of compounds: it means *divination*, or the art of magically deducing some weighty inference (generally prophetic) from any one of the many dark sources sanctioned by Pagan superstition. And universally the particular source relied on is expressed in the prior half of the compound. For instance, *oneiros* is the Greek word for a dream; and therefore *oneiromancy* indicates that mode of prophecy which is founded upon the interpretation of dreams. *Ornis*, again (in the genitive case *ornithos*), is the common Greek word for a bird; accordingly, *ornithomancy* means prophecy founded on the particular mode of flight noticed amongst any casual gathering of birds. *Cheir* (χείρ) is Greek for the hand; whence *cheiromancy* expresses the art of predicting a man's fortune by the lines in his hand, or (under its Latin form from *palma*) *palmistry: Nekros*, a dead man, and consequently *necromancy*, prophecy founded on the answer extorted either from phantoms, as by the Witch of Endor, or from the corpse itself, as by Lucan's witch Erictho. I have allowed myself to wander into this ample illustration of the case, having for many years been taxed by ingenuous readers (confessing their own classical ignorance) with too scanty explanations of my meaning. I go on to say that the Greek word *rhabdos* (ῥάβδος), a rod—not that sort of rod which the Roman lictors carried, viz. a bundle of twigs, but a wand about as thick as a common cedar pencil, or, at most, as the ordinary brass rod of stair-carpets—this, when made from a willow-tree, furnished of old, and furnishes to this day in a southern county of England, a potent instrument of divination. But let it be understood that *divination* expresses an idea ampler by much than the word *prophecy*: whilst even this word *prophecy*, already more limited than divination, is most injuriously narrowed in our received translation of the Bible. To unveil or de-

which Christianity has put forth here and in parallel cases. The ordinary physical rhabdomantist, who undertakes to evoke from the dark chambers of our earth wells of water lying far below its surface, and more rarely to evoke minerals, or hidden deposits of jewels and gold, by some magnetic sympathy between his rod and the occult object of his divination, is able to indicate the spot at which this object can be hopefully sought for. Not otherwise has the marvellous magnetism of Christianity called up from darkness sentiments the most august, previously inconceivable, formless, and without life; for previously there had been no religious philosophy equal to the task of ripening such sentiments; but also, at the same time, by incarnating these

cipher what is hidden—that is, in effect, the meaning of divination. And, accordingly, in the writings of St. Paul the phrase *gifts of prophecy* never once indicates what the English reader supposes, but *exegetic* gifts, gifts of interpretation applied to what is dark, of analysis applied to what is logically perplexed, of expansion applied to what is condensed, of practical improvement applied to what might else be overlooked as purely speculative. In Somersetshire, which is a county the most ill-watered of all in England, upon building a house, there arises uniformly a difficulty in selecting a proper spot for sinking a well. The remedy is to call in a set of local rhabdomantists. These men traverse the adjacent ground, holding the willow rod horizontally: wherever that dips, or inclines itself spontaneously to the ground, *there* will be found water. I have myself not only seen the process tried with success, but have witnessed the enormous trouble, delay, and expense, accruing to those of the opposite faction who refused to benefit by this art. To pursue the tentative plan (*i.e.* the plan of trying for water by boring at haphazard) ended, so far as I was aware, in multiplied vexation. In reality, these poor men are, after all, more philosophic than those who scornfully reject their services. For the artists obey unconsciously the logic of Lord Bacon: *they* build upon a long chain of induction, upon the uniform results of their life-long experience. But the counter faction do not deny this experience: all they have to allege is that, agreeably to any laws known to themselves *a priori*, there ought not to be any such experience. Now, a sufficient course of facts overthrows all antecedent plausibilities. Whatever science or scepticism may say, most of the tea-kettles in the vale of Wrington are filled by *rhabdomancy*. And, after all, the supposed *a priori* scruples against this rhabdomancy are only such scruples as would, antecedently to a trial, have pronounced the mariner's compass impossible. There is in both cases alike a blind sympathy of some unknown force, which no man can explain, with a passive index that practically guides you aright—even if Mephistopheles should be at the bottom of the affair.

sentiments in images of corresponding grandeur, it has so exalted their character as to lodge them eternally in human hearts.

Flowers, for example, that are so pathetic in their beauty, frail as the clouds, and in their colouring as gorgeous as the heavens, had through thousands of years been the heritage of children—honoured as the jewellery of God only by *them*—when suddenly the voice of Christianity, countersigning the voice of infancy, raised them to a grandeur transcending the Hebrew throne, although founded by God himself, and pronounced Solomon in all his glory not to be arrayed like one of these. Winds again, hurricanes, the eternal breathings, soft or loud, of Æolian power, wherefore had they, raving or sleeping, escaped all moral arrest and detention? Simply because vain it were to offer a nest for the reception of some new moral birth whilst no religion is yet moving amongst men that can furnish such a birth. Vain is the image that should illustrate a heavenly sentiment, if the sentiment is yet unborn. Then, first, when it had become necessary to the purposes of a spiritual religion that the spirit of man, as the fountain of all religion, should in some commensurate reflex image have its grandeur and its mysteriousness emblazoned, suddenly the pomp and mysterious path of winds and tempests, blowing whither they list, and from what fountains no man knows, are cited from darkness and neglect, to give and to receive reciprocally an impassioned glorification, where the lower mystery enshrines and illustrates the higher. Call for the grandest of all earthly spectacles, what is *that?* It is the sun going to his rest. Call for the grandest of all human sentiments, what is *that?* It is that man should forget his anger before he lies down to sleep. And these two grandeurs, the mighty sentiment and the mighty spectacle, are by Christianity married together.

Here again, in his prayer "Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord!" were the darkness and the great shadows of night made symbolically significant: these great powers, Night and Darkness, that belong to aboriginal Chaos, were made representative of the perils that continually menace poor afflicted human nature. With deepest sympathy I accompanied the prayer against the perils of darkness—

perils that I seemed to see, in the ambush of midnight solitude, brooding around the beds of sleeping nations; perils from even worse forms of darkness shrouded within the recesses of blind human hearts; perils from temptations weaving unseen snares for our footing; perils from the limitations of our own misleading knowledge.

Prayers had finished. The school had dissolved itself. Six o'clock came, seven, eight. By three hours nearer stood the dying day to its departure. By three hours nearer, therefore, stood we to that darkness which our English liturgy calls into such symbolic grandeur, as hiding beneath its shadowy mantle all perils that besiege our human infirmity. But in summer, in the immediate suburbs of midsummer, the vast scale of the heavenly movements is read in their slowness. Time becomes the expounder of Space. And now, though eight o'clock had struck, the sun was still lingering above the horizon: the light, broad and gaudy, having still two hours of travel to face before it would assume that tender fading hue prelusive to the twilight.[1] Now came the last official ceremony of the day: the students were all mustered; and the names of all were challenged according to the order of precedency. My name, as usual, came first.[2] Stepping forward, I passed Mr. Lawson, and

[1] "*To the twilight*":—*i.e.* to the second twilight: for I remember to have read in some German work upon Hebrew antiquities, and also in a great English divine of 1630 (namely, Isaac Ambrose), that the Jews in elder times made two twilights, first and second: the first they called the dove's twilight, or crepusculum of the day; the second they called the raven's twilight, or crepusculum of the night.

[2] "*First*":—Within the school I should *not* have been first: for in the trinity which composed the head class there was no absolute or meritorious precedency, but simply a precedency of chance. Our dignity, as leaders of the school, raised us above all petty competitions; yet, as it was unavoidable to stand in some order, this was regulated by seniority. I, therefore, as junior amongst the three, was *tertius inter pares*. But my two seniors happened to be day-scholars: so that, in Mr. Lawson's house, I rose into the supreme place. *There*, I was *princeps senatûs*. Such trivial circumstantialities I notice, as checks upon all openings to inaccuracy, great or small. It would vitiate the interest which any reader might otherwise take in this narrative, if for one moment it were supposed that any feature of the case were varnished or distorted. From the very first, I had been faithful to the most rigorous law of accuracy—even in absolute trifles. But I became even

bowed to him, looking earnestly in his face, and saying to myself, "He is old and infirm, and in this world I shall not see him again." I was right; I never *did* see him again, nor ever shall. He looked at me complacently; smiled placidly; returned my salutation (not knowing it to be my valediction); and we parted for ever. Intellectually, I might not have seen cause to reverence him in any emphatic sense. But very sincerely I respected him as a conscientious man, faithful to his duties, and as, even in his latter ineffectual struggle with these duties, inflicting more suffering upon himself than upon others; finally, I respected him as a sound and accurate (though not brilliant) scholar. Personally I owed him much gratitude; for he had been uniformly kind to me, and had allowed me such indulgences as lay in his power; and I grieved at the thought of the mortification I should inflict upon him.

The morning came which was to launch me into the world; that morning from which, and from its consequences, my whole succeeding life has, in many important points, taken its colouring. At half after three I rose, and gazed with deep emotion at the ancient collegiate church, "dressed in earliest light," and beginning to crimson with the deep lustre of a cloudless July morning. I was firm and immoveable in my purpose, but yet agitated by anticipation of uncertain danger and troubles. To this agitation the deep peace of the morning presented an affecting contrast, and in some degree a medicine. The silence was more profound than that of midnight: and to me the silence of a summer morning is more touching than all other silence, because, the

more jealous over myself, after an Irish critic, specially brilliant as a wit and as a scholar, but also specially malicious, had attempted to impeach the accuracy of my narrative, in its London section, upon alleged internal grounds.

I wish it could have been said with truth, that we of the leading form were, not a triad, but a duad. The facts, however, of the case will not allow me to say this. Facts, as people generally remark, are stubborn things. Yes, and too often very spiteful things; as in this case, where, if it were not for *them*, I might describe myself as having one sole assessor in the class, and in that case he and I might have been likened to Castor and Pollux, who went up and down like alternate buckets—one rising with the dawn (or Phosphorus), and the other (viz. myself) rising with Hesperus, and reigning all night long.

light being broad and strong as that of noonday at other seasons of the year, it seems to differ from perfect day chiefly because man is not yet abroad, and thus the peace of nature, and of the innocent creatures of God, seems to be secure and deep only so long as the presence of man, and his unquiet spirit, are not there to trouble its sanctity. I dressed myself, took my hat and gloves, and lingered a little in the room. For nearly a year and a-half this room had been my "pensive citadel": here I had read and studied through all the hours of night; and, though true it was that, for the latter part of this time, I had lost my gaiety and peace of mind during the strife and fever of contention with my guardian, yet, on the other hand, as a boy passionately fond of books, and dedicated to intellectual pursuits, I could not fail to have enjoyed many happy hours in the midst of general dejection.

Happy hours? Yes; and was it certain that ever again I should enjoy hours *as* happy? At this point it is not impossible that, left to my own final impressions, I might have receded from my plan. But it seemed to me, as too often happens in such cases, that no retreat was now open. The confidence which unavoidably I had reposed in a groom of Mr. Lawson's made it dangerous. The effect of this distracted view was, not to alter my plan, but to throw despondency for one sad half-hour over the whole prospect before me. In that condition, with my eyes open, I dreamed. Suddenly a sort of trance, a frost as of some death-like revelation, wrapped round me; and I found renewed within me a hateful remembrance derived from a moment that I had long left behind. Two years before, when I wanted about as much of my fifteenth birth-day as now of my seventeenth, I happened to be in London for part of a single day, with a friend of my own age. Naturally, amongst some eight or ten great spectacles which challenged our earnest attention, St. Paul's Cathedral had been one. This we had visited, and consequently the Whispering Gallery.[1] More than by all beside

[1] To those who have never visited the Whispering Gallery, nor have read any account of it amongst other acoustic phenomena described in scientific treatises, it may be proper to mention, as the distinguishing feature of the case, that a word or a question, uttered at one end of the

I had been impressed by this: and some half-hour later, as we were standing beneath the dome, and I should imagine pretty nearly on the very spot where rather more than five years subsequently Lord Nelson was buried,—a spot from which we saw, pompously floating to and fro in the upper spaces of a great aisle running westwards from ourselves, many flags captured from France, Spain, and Holland,—I, having my previous impressions of awe deepened by these solemn trophies of chance and change amongst mighty nations, had suddenly been surprised by a dream as profound as at present, in which a thought that often had persecuted me figured triumphantly. This thought turned upon the fatality that must often attend an evil choice. As an oracle of fear I remembered that great Roman warning, *Nescit vox missa reverti* (that a word once uttered is irrevocable), a freezing arrest upon the motions of hope too sanguine that haunted me in many shapes. Long before that fifteenth year of mine, I had noticed, as a worm lying at the heart of life and fretting its security, the fact that innumerable acts of choice change countenance and are variously appraised at varying stages of life—shift with the shifting hours. Already, at fifteen, I had become deeply ashamed of judgments which I had once pronounced, of idle hopes that I had once encouraged, false admirations or contempts with which once I had sympathised. And, as to acts which I surveyed with any doubts at all, I never felt sure that after some succession of years I might not feel withering doubts about them, both as to principle and as to inevitable results.

This sentiment of nervous recoil from any word or deed that could not be recalled had been suddenly re-awakened on that London morning by the impressive experience of the Whispering Gallery. At the earlier end of the gallery had stood my friend, breathing in the softest of whispers a solemn but not acceptable truth. At the further end, after running along the walls of the gallery, that solemn truth reached me as a deafening menace in tempestuous uproars. And now, in these last lingering moments, when I dreamed ominously with open eyes in my Manchester study, once again that

gallery in the gentlest of whispers, is reverberated at the other end in peals of thunder.

London menace broke angrily upon me as out of a thick cloud with redoubled strength; a voice, too late for warning, seemed audibly to say, "Once leave this house, and a Rubicon is placed between thee and all possibility of return. Thou wilt not say that what thou doest is altogether approved in thy secret heart. Even now thy conscience speaks against it in sullen whispers; but at the other end of thy long life-gallery that same conscience will speak to thee in volleying thunders."

A sudden step upon the stairs broke up my dream, and recalled me to myself. Dangerous hours were now drawing near, and I prepared for a hasty farewell.

I shed tears as I looked round on the chair, hearth, writing-table, and other familiar objects, knowing too certainly that I looked upon them for the last time. Whilst I write this, it is nineteen [1] years ago; and yet, at this moment, I see, as if it were but yesterday, the lineaments and expressions of the object on which I fixed my parting gaze. It was the picture of a lovely lady, which hung over the mantelpiece; the eyes and mouth of which were so beautiful, and the whole countenance so radiant with divine tranquillity, that I had a thousand times laid down my pen, or my book, to gather consolation from it, as a devotee from his patron saint.[2] Whilst I was yet gazing upon it, the deep tones of the old church clock proclaimed that it was six o'clock. I went up to the picture, kissed it, then gently walked out, and closed the door for ever. . . . .

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[1] Written in the August of 1821.

[2] The housekeeper was in the habit of telling me that the lady had *lived* (meaning, perhaps, had been *born*) two centuries ago; that date would better agree with the tradition that the portrait was a copy from Vandyke. All that she knew further about the lady was that either to the grammar school, or to that particular college at Oxford with which the school was connected, or else to that particular college at Oxford with which Mr. Lawson personally was connected, or else, fourthly, to Mr. Lawson himself as a private individual, the unknown lady had been a special benefactress. She was also a special benefactress to me, through eighteen months, by means of her sweet Madonna countenance. And in some degree it serves to spiritualise and to hallow this service that of her who unconsciously rendered it I know neither the name, nor the exact rank or age, nor the place where she lived and died. She was parted from me by perhaps two centuries; I from her by the gulf of eternity.

So blended and intertwisted in this life are occasions of laughter and of tears that I cannot yet recall without smiling an incident which occurred at that time, and which had nearly put a stop to the immediate execution of my plan. I had a trunk of immense weight; for, besides my clothes, it contained nearly all my library. The difficulty was to get this removed to a carrier's, my room being at an aerial elevation in the house; and (what was worse) the staircase which communicated with this angle of the building was accessible only by a gallery, which passed the head-master's chamber-door. I was a favourite with all the servants; and, knowing that any of them would screen me, and act confidentially, I communicated my embarrassment to a groom of the head-master's. The groom declared his readiness to do anything I wished; and, when the time arrived, went up-stairs to bring the trunk down. This I feared was beyond the strength of any one man: however, the groom was a man "of Atlantean shoulders," and had a back as spacious as Salisbury Plain. Accordingly he persisted in bringing down the trunk alone, whilst I stood waiting at the foot of the last flight, in great anxiety for the event. For some time I heard him descending with steps slow and steady; but, unfortunately, from his trepidation, as he drew near the dangerous quarter, within a few steps of the gallery, his foot slipped; and the mighty burden, falling from his shoulders, gained such increase of impetus at each step of the descent, that, on reaching the bottom, it trundled, or rather leaped, right across, with the noise of twenty devils, against the very bedroom-door of the Archididascalus. My first thought suggested that all was lost, and that my sole chance for effecting a retreat was to sacrifice my baggage. However, on reflection, I determined to abide the issue. The groom, meantime, was in the utmost alarm, both on his own account and mine: but, in spite of this, so irresistibly had the sense of the ludicrous, in this unhappy *contretemps*, taken possession of his fancy that he sang out a long, loud, and canorous peal of laughter, that might have wakened the "Seven Sleepers." At the sound of this resonant merriment, within the very ears of insulted authority, I could not forbear joining in it; subdued to this, not

so much by the comic wilfulness of the trunk, trundling down from step to step with accelerated pace and multiplying uproar, like the λαὰς ἀναιδής [1] (the contumacious stone) of Sisyphus, as by the effect it had upon the groom. We both expected, as a matter of course, that Mr. Lawson would sally out of his room; for, in general, if but a mouse stirred, he sprang out like a mastiff from his kennel. Strange to say, however, on this occasion, when the noise of laughter had subsided, no sound, or rustling even, was to be heard in the bedroom. Mr. Lawson had a painful complaint, which, oftentimes keeping him awake, made his sleep, when it *did* come, peculiarly deep. Gathering courage from the silence, the groom hoisted his burden again, and accomplished the remainder of his descent without accident. I waited until I saw the trunk placed on a wheelbarrow, and on its road to the carrier's: then, "with Providence my guide," or, more truly it might be said, with my own headstrong folly for law and impulse, I set off on foot; carrying a small parcel with some articles of dress under my arm, a favourite English poet in one pocket, and an odd volume, containing about one-half of Canter's "Euripides," in the other.

On leaving Manchester, by a south-western route, towards Chester and Wales, the first town that I reached (to the best of my remembrance) was Altrincham—colloquially called *Awtrigem*. When a child of three years old, and suffering from the hooping-cough, I had been carried for change of air to different places on the Lancashire coast; and, in order to benefit by as large a compass as possible of varying atmospheres, I and my nurse had been made to rest for the first night of our tour at this cheerful little town of Altrincham. On the next morning, which ushered in a most dazzling day of July, I rose earlier than my nurse fully approved: but in no long time she found it advisable to follow my example; and, after putting me through my morning's drill of ablutions and the Lord's-prayer, no sooner had she fully arranged my petticoats than she lifted me up in her arms, threw open the window, and let me suddenly

[1] "Αὖτις ἔπειτα πεδόνδε κυλίνδετο λαὰς αναιδής."—*Hom. Odyss.*

look down upon the gayest scene I had ever beheld—viz. the little market-place of Altrincham at eight o'clock in the morning. It happened to be the market-day; and I, who till then had never consciously been in any town whatever, was equally astonished and delighted with the novel gaiety of the scene. Fruits, such as can be had in July, and flowers were scattered about in profusion: even the stalls of the butchers, from their brilliant cleanliness, appeared attractive: and the bonny young women of Altrincham were all tripping about in caps and aprons coquettishly disposed. The general hilarity of the scene at this early hour, with the low murmurings of pleasurable conversation and laughter, that rose up like a fountain to the open window, left so profound an impression upon me that I never lost it. All this occurred, as I have said, about eight o'clock on a superb July morning. Exactly at that time of the morning, on exactly such another heavenly day of July, did I, leaving Manchester at six A.M., naturally enough find myself in the centre of the Altrincham market-place. Nothing had altered. There were the very same fruits and flowers; the same bonny young women tripping up and down in the same (no, *not* the same) coquettish bonnets; everything was apparently the same: perhaps the window of my bedroom was still open, only my nurse and I were not looking out; for alas! on recollection, fourteen years precisely had passed since then. Breakfast time, however, is always a cheerful stage of the day; if a man can forget his cares at any season, it is then; and after a walk of seven miles it is doubly so. I felt it at the time, and have stopped, therefore, to notice it, as a singular coincidence, that twice, and by the merest accident, I should find myself, precisely as the clocks on a July morning were all striking eight, drawing inspiration of pleasurable feelings from the genial sights and sounds in the little market-place of Altrincham. There I breakfasted; and already by the two hours' exercise I felt myself half restored to health. After an hour's rest, I started again upon my journey: all my gloom and despondency were already retiring to the rear; and, as I left Altrincham, I said to myself, "All places, it seems, are not Whispering Galleries."

The distance between Manchester and Chester *was* about forty miles. What it *is* under railway changes I know not. This I planned to walk in two days: for, though the whole might have been performed in one, I saw no use in exhausting myself; and my walking powers were rusty from long disuse. I wished to bisect the journey; and, as nearly as I could expect—*i.e.* within two or three miles—such a bisection was attained in a clean roadside inn, of the class so commonly found in England. A kind, motherly landlady, easy in her circumstances, having no motive for rapacity, and looking for her livelihood much less to her inn than to her farm, guaranteed to me a safe and profound night's rest. On the following morning there remained not quite eighteen miles between myself and venerable Chester. Before I reached it, so mighty now (as ever before and since) had become the benefit from the air and the exercise that oftentimes I felt inebriated and crazy with ebullient spirits. But for the accursed letter, which sometimes

> "Came over me,
> As doth the raven o'er the infected house,"

I should have too much forgot my gravity under this newborn health. For two hours before reaching Chester, from the accident of the south-west course which the road itself pursued, I saw held up aloft before my eyes that matchless spectacle,

> "New, and yet as old
> As the foundations of the heavens and earth,"

an elaborate and pompous sunset hanging over the mountains of North Wales. The clouds passed slowly through several arrangements, and in the last of these I read the very scene which six months before I had read in a most exquisite poem of Wordsworth's, extracted entire into a London newspaper (I think the "St. James's Chronicle"). It was a Canadian lake,

> "With all its fairy crowds
> Of islands that together lie
> As quietly as spots of sky
> Amongst the evening clouds."

The scene in the poem ("Ruth"), that had been originally

mimicked by the poet from the sky, was here re-mimicked and rehearsed to the life, as it seemed, by the sky from the poet. Was I then, in July 1802, really quoting from Wordsworth? Yes, reader; and I only in all Europe. In 1799 I had become acquainted with "We are Seven" at Bath. In the winter of 1801-2 I had read the whole of "Ruth"; early in 1803 I had written to Wordsworth. In May of 1803 I had received a very long answer from Wordsworth.

The next morning after reaching Chester, my first thought on rising was directed to the vexatious letter in my custody. The odious responsibility, thrust upon me in connexion with this letter, was now becoming every hour more irritating, because every hour more embarrassing to the freedom of my own movements, since it must by this time have drawn the post-office into the ranks of my pursuers. Indignant I was that this letter should have the power of making myself an accomplice in causing anxiety, perhaps even calamity, to the poor emigrant—a man doubly liable to unjust suspicion; first, as by his profession presumably poor, and, secondly, as an alien. Indignant I was that this most filthy of letters should also have the power of forcing me into all sorts of indirect and cowardly movements at inns; for beyond all things it seemed to me important that I should not be arrested, or even for a moment challenged, as the wrongful holder of an important letter, before I had testified, by my own spontaneous transfer of it, that I had not dallied with any idea of converting it to my own benefit. In some way I must contrive to restore the letter. But was it not then the simplest of all courses to take my hat before sitting down to breakfast, present myself at the post-office, tender my explanation, and then (like Christian in Bunyan's allegory) to lay down my soul-wearying burden at the feet of those who could sign my certificate of absolution? Was not *that* simple? Was not *that* easy? Oh yes, beyond a doubt. And, if a favourite fawn should be carried off by a lion, would it not be a very simple and easy course to walk after the robber, follow him into his den, and reason with the wretch on the indelicacy of his conduct? In my particular circumstances, the post-office was in relation to

myself simply a lion's den. Two separate parties, I felt satisfied, must by this time be in chase of me; and the two chasers would be confluent at the post-office. Beyond all other objects which I had to keep in view, paramount was that of fencing against my own re-capture. Anxious I was on behalf of the poor foreigner; but it did not strike me that to this anxiety I was bound to sacrifice myself. Now, if I went to the post-office, I felt sure that nothing else would be the result; and afterwards it turned out that in this anticipation I had been right. For it struck me that the nature of the enclosure in the French letter—viz. the fact that without a forgery it was not negotiable—could not be known certainly to anybody but myself. Doubts upon that point must have quickened the anxieties of all connected with myself, or connected with the case. More urgent consequently would have been the applications of "Monsieur Monsieur" to the post-office; and consequently of the post-office to the Priory; and consequently more easily suggested and concerted between the post-office and the Priory would be all the arrangements for stopping me, in the event of my taking the route of Chester—in which case it was natural to suppose that I might *personally* return the letter to the official authorities. Of course, none of these measures was certainly known to myself; but I guessed at them as reasonable probabilities; and it was evident that the fifty and odd hours since my elopement from Manchester had allowed ample time for concerting all the requisite preparations. As a last resource, in default of any better occurring, it is likely enough that my anxiety would have tempted me into this mode of surrendering my abominable trust, which by this time I regarded with such eyes of burning malice as Sinbad must have directed at intervals towards the venerable ruffian that sat astride upon his shoulders. But things had not yet come to Sinbad's state of desperation; so, immediately after breakfast, I took my hat, determining to review the case and adopt some final decision in the open air. For I have always found it easier to think over a matter of perplexity whilst walking in wide open spaces, under the broad eye of the natural heavens, than whilst shut up in a room. But at the very door of the inn

I was suddenly brought to a pause by the recollection that some of the servants from the Priory were sure on every forenoon to be at times in the streets. The streets, however, could be evaded by shaping a course along the city walls; which I did, and descended into some obscure lane that brought me gradually to the banks of the river Dee. In the infancy of its course amongst the Denbighshire mountains, this river (famous in our pre-Norman history for the earliest parade[1] of English monarchy) is wild and picturesque; and even below my mother's Priory it wears a character of interest. But, a mile or so nearer to its mouth, when leaving Chester for Parkgate, it becomes miserably tame; and the several reaches of the river take the appearance of formal canals. On the right bank[2] of the river runs an artificial mound, called the Cop. It was, I believe, originally a Danish work; and certainly its name is Danish (*i.e.* Icelandic, or old Danish), and the same from which is derived our architectural word *coping*. Upon this bank I was walking, and throwing my gaze along the formal vista presented by the river. Some trifle of anxiety might mingle with this gaze at the first, lest perhaps Philistines might be abroad; for it was just possible that I had been watched. But I have generally found that, if you are in quest of some certain escape from Philistines of whatsoever class—sheriff-officers, bores, no matter what—the surest refuge is to be found amongst hedgerows and fields, amongst cows and sheep: in

[1] "*Earliest parade*":—It was a very scenical parade, for somewhere along this reach of the Dee—viz. immediately below St. John's Priory—Edgar, the first sovereign of all England, was rowed by nine vassal *reguli*.

[2] "*Right bank*":—But which bank *is* right, and which left, under circumstances of position varying by possibility without end? This is a reasonable demur; but yet it argues an inexperienced reader. For always the position of the spectator is conventionally fixed. In military tactics, in philosophic geography, in history, &c., the uniform assumption is that you are standing with your back to the source of the river, and your eyes travelling along with its current. That bank of the river which under these circumstances lies upon your right is the right bank *absolutely*, and not *relatively* only (as would be the case if a room, and not a river, were concerned). Hence it follows that the Middlesex side of the Thames is always the left bank, and the Surrey side always the right bank, no matter whether you are moving from London to Oxford, or reversely from Oxford to London.

fact, cows are amongst the gentlest of breathing creatures; none show more passionate tenderness to their young when deprived of them; and, in short, I am not ashamed to profess a deep love for these quiet creatures. On the present occasion there were many cows grazing in the fields below the Cop: but all along the Cop itself I could descry no person whatever answering to the idea of a Philistine: in fact, there was nobody at all, except one woman, apparently middle-aged (meaning by *that* from thirty-five to forty-five), neatly dressed, though perhaps in rustic fashion, and by no possibility belonging to any class of my enemies; for already I was near enough to see so much. This woman might be a quarter-of-a-mile distant, and was steadily advancing towards me—face to face. Soon, therefore, I was beginning to read the character of her features pretty distinctly; and her countenance naturally served as a mirror to echo and reverberate my own feelings, consequently my own horror (horror without exaggeration it was), at a sudden uproar of tumultuous sounds rising clamorously ahead. *Ahead* I mean in relation to myself, but to *her* the sound was from the rear. Our situation was briefly this. Nearly half-a-mile behind the station of the woman, that reach of the river along which we two were moving came to an abrupt close; so that the next reach, making nearly a right-angled turn, lay entirely out of view. From this unseen reach it was that the angry clamour, so passionate and so mysterious, arose: and I, for *my* part, having never heard such a fierce battling outcry, nor even heard *of* such a cry, either in books or on the stage, in prose or verse, could not so much as whisper a guess to myself upon its probable cause. Only this I felt, that blind, unorganised nature it must be—and nothing in human or in brutal wrath—that could utter itself by such an anarchy of sea-like uproars. What was it? Where was it? Whence was it? Earthquake was it? convulsion of the steadfast earth? or was it the breaking loose from ancient chains of some deep morass like that of Solway? More probable it seemed that the ἄνω ποτάμων of Euripides (the flowing backwards of rivers to their fountains) now, at last, after ages of expectation, had been suddenly realised. Not long I needed to speculate; for within half-a-minute, perhaps, from

the first arrest of our attention, the proximate cause of this mystery declared itself to our eyes, although the remote cause (the hidden cause of that visible cause) was still as dark as before. Round that right-angled turn which I have mentioned as wheeling into the next succeeding reach of the river, suddenly as with the trampling of cavalry—but all dressing accurately—and the water at the outer angle sweeping so much faster than that at the inner angle as to keep the front of advance rigorously in line, violently careered round into our own placid watery vista a huge charging block of waters, filling the whole channel of the river, and coming down upon us at the rate of forty miles an hour. Well was it for us, myself and that respectable rustic woman, us the Deucalion and Pyrrha of this perilous moment, sole survivors apparently of the deluge (since by accident there was at that particular moment on that particular Cop nothing else to survive), that by means of this Cop, and of ancient Danish hands (possibly not yet paid for their work), we *could* survive. In fact, this watery breastwork, a perpendicular wall of water carrying itself as true as if controlled by a mason's plumb-line, rode forward at such a pace that obviously the fleetest horse or dromedary would have had no chance of escape. Many a decent railway even, among railways since born its rivals, would not have had above the third of a chance. Naturally, I had too short a time for observing much or accurately; and universally I am a poor hand at observing; else I should say that this riding block of crystal waters did not gallop, but went at a long trot; yes, long trot—that most frightful of paces in a tiger, in a buffalo, or in a rebellion of waters. Even a ghost, I feel convinced, would appal me more if coming up at a long diabolical trot than at a canter or gallop. The first impulse to both of us was derived from cowardice; cowardice the most abject and selfish. Such is man, though a Deucalion elect; such is woman, though a decent Pyrrha. Both of us ran like hares; neither did I, Deucalion, think of poor Pyrrha at all for the first sixty seconds. Yet, on the other hand, why *should* I? It struck me seriously that St. George's Channel (and, if so, beyond a doubt, the Atlantic Ocean) had broke loose, and was, doubtless, playing the same in-

sufferable gambols upon all rivers along a seaboard of six to seven thousand miles; in which case, as all the race of woman must be doomed, how romantic a speculation it was for me, sole relic of literature, to think specially of one poor Pyrrha, probably very illiterate, whom I had never yet spoken to! That idea pulled me up. *Not spoken to her?* Then I *would* speak to her; and the more so because the sound of the pursuing river told me that flight was useless. And, besides, if any reporter or sub-editor of some Chester chronicle should, at this moment, with his glass be sweeping the Cop, and discover me flying under these unchivalrous circumstances, he might gibbet me to all eternity. Halting, therefore (and really I had not run above eighty or a hundred steps), I waited for my solitary co-tenant of the Cop. She was a little blown by running, and could not easily speak; besides which, at the very moment of her coming up, the preternatural column of waters, running in the very opposite direction to the natural current of the river, came up with us, ran by with the ferocious uproar of a hurricane, sent up the sides of the Cop a salute of waters, as if hypocritically pretending to kiss our feet, but secretly understood by all parties as a vain treachery for pulling us down into the flying deluge; whilst all along both banks the mighty refluent wash was heard as it rode along, leaving memorials, by sight and by sound, of its victorious power. But my female associate in this terrific drama, what said she, on coming up with me? Or what said I? For, by accident, I it was that spoke first; notwithstanding the fact, notorious and undeniable, that *I had never been introduced to her.* Here, however, be it understood, as a case now solemnly adjudicated and set at rest, that, in the midst of any great natural convulsion—earthquake, suppose, waterspout, tornado, or eruption of Vesuvius—it shall and may be lawful in all time coming (any usage or tradition to the contrary notwithstanding) for two English people to communicate with each other, although, by affidavit made before two justices of the peace, it shall have been proved that no previous introduction had been possible: in all other cases the old statute of non-intercourse holds good. Meantime, the present case, in default of more circumstantial evidence, might be regarded,

if not as an earthquake, yet as ranking amongst the first-fruits or blossoms of an earthquake. So I spoke without scruple. All my freezing English reserve gave way under this boiling sense of having been so recently running for life: and then, again, suppose the water column should come back—riding *along with* the current, and no longer riding *against* it—in that case, we and all the County Palatine might soon have to run for our lives. Under such threatenings of common peril, surely the παῤῥησία, or unlimited license of speech, ought spontaneously to proclaim itself without waiting for sanction.

So I asked her the meaning of this horrible tumult in the waters: how did she read the mystery? Her answer was, that, though she had never before seen such a thing, yet from her grandmother she had often heard of it; and, if she had run before it, *that* was because *I* ran; and a little, perhaps, because the noise frightened her. What was it, then? I asked. "It was," she said, "*The Bore;* and it was an affection to which only some few rivers here and there were liable; and the Dee was one of these." So ignorant was I that, until that moment, I had never heard of such a nervous affection in rivers. Subsequently I found that, amongst English rivers, the neighbouring river Severn, a far more important stream, suffered at spring-tides the same kind of hysterics, and perhaps some few other rivers in this British Island; but amongst Indian rivers only the Ganges.

At last, when *The Bore* had been discussed to the full extent of our united ignorance, I went off to the subject of that other curse, far more afflicting than any conceivable bore—viz. the foreign letter in my pocket. *The Bore* had certainly alarmed us for ninety or a hundred seconds, but the letter would poison my very existence, like the bottle-imp, until I could transfer it to some person truly qualified to receive it. Might not my fair friend on the Cop be marked out by Fate as "the coming woman" born to deliver me from this pocket curse? It is true that she displayed a rustic simplicity somewhat resembling that of Audrey in "As you like it." *Her*, in fact, not at all more than Audrey had the gods been pleased to make "poetical." But, for my particular mission, *that* might be amongst her best qualifica-

tions. At any rate, I was wearied in spirit under my load of responsibility: personally to liberate myself by visiting the post-office too surely I felt as the ruin of my enterprise in its very outset. Some agent *must* be employed; and where could one be found promising by looks, words, manners, more trustworthiness than this agent, sent by accident? The case almost explained itself. She readily understood how the resemblance of a name had thrown the letter into my possession; and that the simple remedy was to restore it to the right owner through the right channel, which channel was the never-enough-to-be-esteemed General Post-office, at that time pitching its tents and bivouacking nightly in Lombard Street, but for this special case legally represented by the Chester head-office: a service of no risk to *her*, for which, on the contrary, all parties would thank her. I, to begin, begged to put *my* thanks into the shape of half-a-crown: but, as some natural doubts arose with respect to her precise station in life (for she might be a farmer's wife, and not a servant), I thought it advisable to postulate the existence of some youthful daughter: to which mythological person I begged to address my offering, when incarnated in the shape of a doll.

I therefore, Deucalion that was or had been provisionally through a brief interval of panic, took leave of my Pyrrha, sole partner in the perils and anxieties of that astounding Bore, dismissing her—Thessalian Pyrrha—not to any Thessalian vales of Tempe, but—O ye powers of moral anachronism!—to the Chester Post-office; and warning her on no account to be prematurely wheedled out of her secret. Her position, diplomatically speaking, was better (as I made her understand) than that of the post-office: she having something in her gift—viz. an appointment to forty guineas; whereas in the counter-gift of the proud post-office was nothing; neither for instant fruition nor in far-off reversion. Her, in fact, one might regard as a Pandora, carrying a box with something better than hope at the bottom; for hope too often betrays; but a draft upon Smith, Payne, & Smith, which never betrays, and for a sum which, on the authority of Goldsmith, makes an English clergyman "passing rich" through a whole twelvemonth, entitled

her to look scornfully upon every second person that she met.

In about two hours the partner of my solitary kingdom upon the Cop re-appeared, with the welcome assurance that Chester had survived the Bore, that all was right, and that anything which ever *had* been looking crooked was now made straight as the path of an arrow. She had given "my love" (so she said) to the post-office; had been thanked by more than either one or two amongst the men of letters who figured in the equipage of that establishment; and had been assured that, long before daylight departed, one large cornucopia of justice and felicity would be emptied out upon the heads of all parties in the drama. I myself, not the least afflicted person on the roll, was already released—suddenly released, and fully—from the iniquitous load of responsibility thrust upon me; the poor emigrant was released from his conflict with fears that were uncertain, and creditors too certain; the post-office was released from the scandal and embarrassment of a gross irregularity, that might eventually have brought the postmaster-general down upon their haunches; and the household at the Priory were released from all anxieties, great and small, sound and visionary, on the question of my fancied felony.

In those anxieties one person there was that never had condescended to participate. This was my eldest sister Mary—just eleven months senior to myself. She was among the gentlest of girls, and yet from the very first she had testified the most incredulous disdain of all who fancied *her* brother capable of any thought so base as that of meditating a wrong to a needy exile. At present, after exchanging a few parting words, and a few final or farewell farewells with my faithful female [1] agent, further business I had none to detain me in Chester, except what concerned this particular sister. My business with *her* was not to thank her for the resolute

[1] Some people are irritated, or even fancy themselves insulted, by overt acts of alliteration, as many people are by puns. On their account let me say that, although there are here eight separate f's in less than half a sentence, this is to be held as pure accident. In fact, at one time their were nine f's in the original cast of the sentence, until I, in pity of the affronted people, substituted *female agent* for *female friend*.

justice which she had done me, since as yet I could not know of that service, but simply to see her, to learn the domestic news of the Priory, and, according to the possibilities of the case, to concert with her some plan of regular correspondence. Meantime it happened that a maternal uncle, a military man on the Bengal establishment, who had come to England on a three-years' leave of absence (according to the custom in those days), was at this time a visitor at the Priory.[1] My mother's establishment of servants was usually limited to five persons —all, except one, elderly and torpid. But my uncle, who had brought to England some beautiful Arab and Persian horses, found it necessary to gather about his stables an extra body of men and boys. These were all alert and active ; so that, when I reconnoitred the windows of the Priory in the dusk, hoping in some way to attract my sister's attention, I not only failed in that object, seeing no lights in any room which could naturally have been occupied by her, but I also found myself growing into an object of special attention to certain unknown servants, who, having no doubt received instructions to look out for me, easily inferred from my anxious movements that I must be the person "wanted." Uneasy at all the novel appearances of things, I went away, and returned, after an hour's interval, armed with a note to my sister, requesting her to watch for an opportunity of coming out for a few minutes under the shadows of the little ruins in the Priory garden,[2] where I meantime would be

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 398.—M.

[2] "*The little ruins in the Priory garden*" :—St. John's Priory had been part of the monastic foundation attached to the very ancient church of St. John, standing beyond the walls of Chester. Early in the seventeenth century, this Priory, or so much of it as remained, was occupied as a dwelling-house by Sir Robert Cotton the antiquary. And there, according to tradition, he had been visited by Ben Jonson. All that remained of the Priory when used as a domestic residence by Cotton was upon a miniature scale, except only the kitchen—a noble room, with a groined roof of stone, exactly as it had been fitted to the uses of the monastic establishment. The little hall of entrance, the dining-room, and principal bedroom, were in a modest style of elegance, fitted by the scale of accommodation for the abode of a literary bachelor, and pretty nearly as Cotton had left them two centuries before. But the miniature character of the Priory, which had dwindled by successive abridgments from a royal quarto into a pretty duodecimo, was seen chiefly in the beautiful ruins which adorned the

waiting. This note I gave to a stranger, whose costume showed him to be a groom, begging him to give it to the young lady whose address it bore. He answered, in a respectful tone, that he would do so; but he could not sincerely have meant it, since (as I soon learned) it was impossible. In fact, not one minute had I waited, when in glided amongst the ruins—not my fair sister, but my bronzed Bengal uncle!

A Bengal tiger would not more have startled me. Now, to a dead certainty, I said, here comes a fatal barrier to the prosecution of my scheme. I was mistaken. Between my mother and my uncle there existed the very deepest affection; for they regarded each other as sole reliques of a household once living together in memorable harmony. But in many features of character no human beings could stand off from each other in more lively repulsion. And this was seen on the present occasion. My dear excellent mother, from the eternal quiet of her decorous household, looked upon every violent or irregular movement, and therefore upon mine at present, much as she would have done upon the opening of

little lawn, across which access was gained to the house through the hall. These ruins amounted at the most to three arches—which, because round and not pointed, were then usually called Saxon, as contradistinguished from Gothic. What might be the exact classification of the architecture I do not know. Certainly the very ancient church of St. John, to which at one time the Priory must have been an appendage, wore a character of harsh and naked simplicity that was repulsive. But the little ruins were really beautiful, and drew continual visits from artists and sketchers through every successive summer. Whether they had any architectural enrichments I do not remember. But they interested all people—first by their miniature scale, which would have qualified them (if portable) for a direct introduction amongst the "properties" and *dramatis personæ* on our London opera boards; and, secondly, by the exquisite beauty of the shrubs, wild flowers, and ferns, that surmounted the arches with natural coronets of the richest composition. In this condition of attractiveness my mother saw this little Priory, which was then on sale. As a residence, it had the great advantage of standing somewhat aloof from the city of Chester, which, however (like all cathedral cities), was quiet and respectable in the composition of its population. My mother bought it, added a drawing-room, eight or nine bedrooms, dressing-rooms, &c., all on the miniature scale corresponding to the original plan; and thus formed a very pretty residence, with the grace of monastic antiquity hanging over the whole little retreat.

the seventh seal in the Revelations. But my uncle was thoroughly a man of the world; and, what told even more powerfully on my behalf in this instance, he was a man of even morbid activity. It was so exquisitely natural in his eyes that any rational person should prefer moving about amongst the breezy mountains of Wales to a slavish routine of study amongst books grim with dust and masters too probably still more dusty, that he seemed disposed to regard my conduct as an extraordinary act of virtue. On his advice, it was decided that there could be no hope in any contest with my main wishes, and that I should be left to pursue my original purpose of walking amongst the Welsh mountains; provided I chose to do so upon the slender allowance of a guinea a-week. My uncle, whose Indian munificence ran riot upon all occasions, would gladly have had a far larger allowance made to me, and would himself have clandestinely given me anything I asked. But I myself, from general ignorance (in which accomplishment I excelled), judged this to be sufficient; and at this point my mother, hitherto passively acquiescent in my uncle's proposals, interfered with a decisive rigour that in my own heart I could not disapprove. Any larger allowance, most reasonably she urged, what was it but to "make proclamation to my two younger brothers that rebellion bore a premium, and that mutiny was the ready road to ease and comfort"? My conscience smote me at these words: I felt something like an electric shock on this sudden reference, so utterly unexpected, to my brothers; for, to say the truth, I never once admitted them to my thoughts in forecasting the eventual consequences that might possibly unroll themselves from my own headstrong act. Here now, within three days, rang like a solemn knell, reverberating from the sounding-board within my awakened conscience, one of those many self-reproaches so dimly masked, but not circumstantially prefigured, by the secret thought under the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral about its dread Whispering Gallery. In this particular instance I know that the evil consequences from my own example never did take effect. But, at the moment of my mother's sorrowful suggestion, the fear that they *might* take effect thrilled me with remorse. My next brother, a boy of generous and

heroic temper, was at a school governed by a brutal and savage master. This brother, I well know, had justifying reasons, ten times weightier than any which I could plead, for copying my precedent. Most probable it was that he would do so; but I learned many years subsequently from himself that in fact he did not. The man's diabolical malice at last made further toleration impossible. Without thinking of my example, under very different circumstances my brother won his own emancipation in ways suggested by his own views and limited by his own resources: he got afloat upon the wide, wide world of ocean; ran along a perilous seven-years' career of nautical romance; had his name almost blotted out from all memories in England; became of necessity a pirate amongst pirates; was liable to the death of a pirate wherever taken; then suddenly, on a morning of battle, having effected his escape from the bloody flag, he joined the English storming party at Monte Video, fought under the eye of Sir Home Popham, the commodore, and within twenty-four hours after the victory was rated as a midshipman on board the *Diadem* (a 64-gun ship), which bore Sir Home's flag. All this I have more circumstantially narrated elsewhere.[1] I repeat the sum of it here, as showing that his elopement from a brutal tyrant was not due to any misleading of mine. I happen to know this now—but then I could not know it. And, if I had so entirely overlooked one such possible result, full of calamity to my youthful brothers, why might I not have overlooked many hundreds beside, equally probable—equally full of peril? That consideration saddened me, and deepened more and more the ominous suggestion—the oracle full of woe—that spoke from those Belshazzar thunderings upon the wall of the Whispering Gallery. In fact, every intricate and untried path in life, where it was from the first a matter of arbitrary choice to enter upon it or avoid it, is effectually a path through a vast Hercynian forest, unexplored and unmapped, where each several turn in your advance leaves you open to new anticipations of what is next to be expected, and consequently open to altered valuations of all that has been already traversed. Even the character of your own absolute experience, past

[1] See chapter, "My Brother Pink," *ante*, vol. i. pp. 287-315.—M.

and gone, which (if anything in this world) you might surely answer for as sealed and settled for ever — even this you must submit to hold in suspense, as a thing conditional and contingent upon what is yet to come — liable to have its provisional character affirmed or reversed, according to the new combinations into which it may enter with elements only yet perhaps in the earliest stages of development.

Saddened by these reflections, I was still more saddened by the chilling manner of my mother. If I could presume to descry a fault in my mother, it was that she turned the chilling aspects of her high-toned character too exclusively upon those whom, in any degree, she knew or supposed to be promoters of evil. Sometimes her austerity might seem even unjust. But at present the whole artillery of her displeasure seemed to be unmasked, and *justly* unmasked, against a moral aberration that offered for itself no excuse that was obvious in one moment, that was legible at one glance, that could utter itself in one word. My mother was predisposed to think ill of all causes that required many words: I, predisposed to subtleties of all sorts and degrees, had naturally become acquainted with cases that could not unrobe their apparellings down to that degree of simplicity. If in this world there is one misery having no relief, it is the pressure on the heart from the *Incommunicable*. And, if another Sphinx should arise to propose another enigma to man — saying, What burden is that which only is insupportable by human fortitude? I should answer at once — *It is the burden of the Incommunicable*. At this moment, sitting in the same room of the Priory with my mother, knowing how reasonable she was — how patient of explanations — how candid — how open to pity — not the less I sank away in a hopelessness that was immeasurable from all effort at explanation. She and I were contemplating the very same act; but she from one centre, I from another. Certain I was that, if through one half-minute she could realise in one deadly experience the suffering with which I had fought through more than three months, the amount of physical anguish, the desolation of all genial life, she would have uttered a rapturous absolution of that which else must always seem to her

a mere explosion of wilful insubordination.[1] "In this brief experience," she would exclaim, "I read the record of your acquittal; in this fiery torment I acknowledge the gladiatorial resistance." Such in the case supposed would have been her revised verdict. But this case was exquisitely impossible. Nothing which offered itself to my rhetoric gave any but the feeblest and most childish reflection of my past sufferings. Just so helpless did I feel, disarmed into just the same languishing impotence to face (or make an effort at facing) the difficulty before me, as most of us have felt in the dreams of our childhood when lying down without a struggle before some all-conquering lion. I felt that the situation was one without hope; a solitary word, which I attempted to mould upon my lips, died away into a sigh; and passively I acquiesced in the apparent confession spread through all the appearances—that in reality I had no palliation to produce.

One alternative, in the offer made to me, was that I had permission to stay at the Priory. The Priory, or the mountainous region of Wales, was offered freely to my choice. Either of the two offered an attractive abode. The Priory, it may be fancied, was clogged with the liability to fresh and intermitting reproaches. But this was not so. I knew my mother sufficiently to be assured that, once having expressed her sorrowful condemnation of my act, having made it impossible for me to misunderstand her views, she was ready to extend her wonted hospitality to me, and (as regarded all practical matters) her wonted kindness; but not that sort of kindness which could make me forget that I stood under the deepest shadows of her displeasure, or could leave me for a moment free to converse at my ease upon any and every subject. A man that is talking on simple toleration, and, as it were, under permanent protest, cannot feel himself morally at his ease, unless very obtuse and coarse in his sensibilities.

Mine, under any situation approaching to the present, were so far from being obtuse that they were morbidly and extravagantly acute. I had erred: that I knew, and did not disguise from myself. Indeed, the rapture of anguish with which I had recurred involuntarily to my experience of the

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 383, footnote.—M.

Whispering Gallery, and the symbolic meaning which I had given to that experience, manifested indirectly my deep sense of error, through the dim misgiving which attended it that in some mysterious way the sense and the consequences of this error would magnify themselves at every stage of life, in proportion as they were viewed retrospectively from greater and greater distances. I had, besides, through the casual allusion to my brothers, suddenly become painfully aware of another and separate failure in the filial obligations resting on myself. Any mother who is a widow has especial claims on the co-operation of her eldest son in all means of giving a beneficial bias to the thoughts and purposes of the younger children: and, if *any* mother, then by a title how special could my own mother invoke such co-operation, who had on *her* part satisfied all the claims made upon her maternal character by self-sacrifices as varied as privately I knew them to be exemplary. Whilst yet comparatively young, not more than thirty-six, she had sternly refused all countenance, on at least two separate occasions, to distinguished proposals of marriage, out of pure regard to the memory of my father, and to the interests of his children. Could I fail to read, in such unostentatious exemplifications of maternal goodness, a summons to a corresponding earnestness on my part in lightening, as much as possible, the burden of her responsibilities? Alas! too certainly, as regarded *that* duty, I felt my own failure: one opportunity had been signally lost. And yet, on the other hand, I also felt that more might be pleaded on my behalf than could by possibility be apparent to a neutral bystander. But this, to be pleaded effectually, needed to be said—not by myself, but by a disinterested advocate: and no such advocate was at hand. In blind distress of mind, conscience-stricken and heart-stricken, I stretched out my arms, seeking for my one sole auxiliary; that was my eldest sister Mary; for my younger sister Jane was a mere infant. Blindly and mechanically, I stretched out my arms as if to arrest her attention; and, giving utterance to my labouring thoughts, I was beginning to speak, when all at once I became sensible that Mary was not there. I had heard a step behind me, and supposed it hers: since the groom's ready acceptance of my letter to her

had pre-occupied me with the belief that I should see her in a few moments. But she was far away, on a mission of anxious, sisterly love.

Immediately after my elopement, an express had been sent off to the Priory from Manchester; this express, well mounted, had not spent more than four hours on the road. He must have passed me on my first day's walk; and, within an hour after *his* arrival, came a communication from the post-office, explaining the nature and value of the letter that had been so vexatiously thrust into my hands. Alarm spread through the Priory: for it must be confessed that the coincidence of my elopement with this certified delivery of the letter to myself gave but too reasonable grounds for connecting the two incidents. I was grateful to dear Mary for resisting such strong plausibilities against me; and yet I could not feel entitled to complain of those who had *not* resisted. The probability seemed that I must have violated the laws to some extent, either by forgery or by fraudulent appropriation. In either case, the most eligible course seemed to be my instant expatriation. France (this being the year of peace) or Holland would offer the best asylum until the affair should be settled; and, as there could be no anxieties in any quarter as to the main thing concerned in the issue—viz. the money—in any case there was no reason to fear a vindictive pursuit, even on the worst assumption as regarded the offence. An elderly gentleman, long connected with the family, and in many cases an agent for the guardians, at this moment offered his services as counsellor and protector to my sister Mary. Two hours therefore from the arrival of the Manchester express (who, starting about 11 A.M., had reached Chester at 3 P.M.), all the requisite steps having been concerted with one of the Chester banks for getting letters of credit, &c., a carriage-and-four was at the Priory gate, into which stepped my sister Mary, with one female attendant and her friendly escort. And thus, the same day on which I had made my exit from Mr. Lawson's saw the chase after me commencing. Sunset saw the pursuers crossing the Mersey, and trotting into Liverpool. Thence to Ormskirk, thirteen miles, and thence to *proud Preston*, about twenty more. Within a trifle, these three

stages make fifty miles; and so much did my chasers, that pursued when no man fled, accomplish before sleeping. On the next day, long and long before the time when I, in my humble pedestrian character, reached Chester, my sister's party had reached Ambleside—distant about ninety-two miles from Liverpool; consequently somewhere about a hundred and seven miles from the Priory. This chasing party, with good reason, supposed themselves to be on my traces ever after reaching "proud Preston," which is the point of confluence for the Liverpool and Manchester roads northwards. For I myself, having originally planned my route for the English Lakes, purposely suffered some indications of that plan to remain behind me, in the hope of thus giving a false direction to any pursuit that might be attempted.

The further course of this chase was disagreeably made known to me about four years later, on attaining my majority, by a "little account" of about £150 against my little patrimonial fortune. Of all the letters from the Priory (which, however, from natural oversight were not thought of until the day after my own arrival at the Priory —*i.e.*, the third day after my sister's departure), not one caught them: which was unfortunate. For the journey to and from the Lakes, together with a circuit of more than one hundred and fifty miles amongst the Lakes, would at any rate have run up to nearly four hundred miles. But it happened that my pursuers, not having time to sift such intelligence as they received, were misled into an excursus of full two hundred miles more, by chasing an imaginary "*me*" to the caves, thence to Bolton Abbey, thence nearly to York. Altogether, the journey amounted to above six hundred miles, all performed with four horses. Now, at that time the cost of four horses—which in the cheapest hay and corn seasons was three shillings a-mile, and in dear seasons four—was three and sixpence a-mile; to which it was usual to compute an average addition of one shilling a-mile for gates, postilions, ostlers; so that the total amount, with the natural expenses of the three travellers at the inns, ran up to five shillings a-mile. Consequently, five shillings being the quarter of a pound, six hundred miles cost the quarter of

£600. The only item in this long account which consoled me to the amount of a solitary smile for all this money thrown away was an item in a bill at Patterdale (head of Ulleswater)—

To an echo, first quality	£0	10	0
To do., second quality	0	5	0

It seems the price of echoes varied, reasonably enough, with the amount of gunpowder consumed. But at Low-wood, on Windermere, half-crown echoes might be had by those base snobs who would put up with a vile Brummagem substitute for "the genuine article."

Trivial, meantime, as regarded any permanent consequences, would have been this casual inroad upon my patrimony. Had I waited until my sister returned home, which I might have been sure could only have been delayed through the imperfectly concerted system of correspondence, all would have prospered. From her I should have received the cordiality and the genial sympathy which I needed; I could have quietly pursued my studies; and my Oxford matriculation would have followed as a matter of course. But, unhappily, having for so long a time been seriously shaken in health, any interruption of my wild open-air system of life instantly threw me back into nervous derangements. Past all doubt it had now become that the *al fresco* life, to which I had looked with so much hopefulness for a sure and rapid restoration to health, was even more potent than I had supposed it. Literally irresistible it seemed in re-organising the system of my languishing powers. Impatient, therefore, under the absence of my sister, and agitated every hour so long as my home wanted its central charm in some household countenance, some *σύντροφον ὄμμα*, beaming with perfect sympathy, I resolved to avail myself of those wild mountainous and sylvan attractions which at present lay nearest to me. Those parts, indeed, of Flintshire, or even of Denbighshire, which lay near to Chester, were not in any very eminent sense attractive. The vale of Gressford, for instance, within the Flintshire border, and yet not more than seven miles distant,

offered a lovely little seclusion; and to this I had a privileged access; and at first I tried it; but it was a dressed and ornamented pleasure-ground: and two ladies of some distinction, nearly related to each other, and old friends of my mother, were in a manner the ladies paramount within the ring fence of this Arcadian vale. But this did not offer what I wanted. Everything was elegant, polished, quiet, throughout the lawns and groves of this verdant retreat: no rudeness was allowed here; even the little brooks were trained to "behave themselves"; and the two villas of the reigning ladies (Mrs. Warrington and Mrs. Parry) showed the perfection of good taste. For both ladies had cultivated a taste for painting, and I believe some executive power. Here my introductions were rather too favourable; since they forced me into society. From Gressford, however, the character of the scene, considered as a daily residence, very soon repelled me, however otherwise fascinating by the accomplishments of its two possessors. Just two-and-twenty miles from Chester, meantime, lay a far grander scene, the fine vale of Llangollen in the centre of Denbighshire. Here, also, the presiding residents were two ladies, whose romantic retirement from the world at an early age had attracted for many years a general interest to their persons, habits, and opinions. These ladies were Irish—Miss Ponsonby, and Lady Eleanor Butler, a sister of Lord Ormond. I had twice been formally presented to them by persons of a rank to stamp a value upon this introduction. But, naturally, though high-bred courtesy concealed any such open expressions of feeling, they must have felt a very slight interest in myself or my opinions.[1] I grieve to say

[1] It is worthy of notice that, when I, in this year 1802, and again in after years, endeavoured to impress them favourably with regard to Wordsworth as a poet (that subject having not been introduced by myself, but by one of the ladies, who happened to have a Cambridge friend intimate with the man, and perhaps with his works), neither of them was disposed to look with any interest or hopefulness upon his pretensions. But, at a period long subsequent to this, when the House of Commons had rung with applause on Sergeant Talfourd's mention of his name, and when all American tourists of any distinction flocked annually to Rydal Mount, Wordsworth's own poems bear witness that a great revolution had been worked at Llangollen. I mention this anecdote, because I have good reason to think that a large

that my own feelings were not more ardent towards *them*. Nevertheless, I presented myself at their cottage as often as I passed through Llangollen; and was always courteously received when they happened to be in the country. However, as it was not ladies that I was seeking in Wales, I now pushed on to Carnarvonshire; and for some weeks took a very miniature suite of rooms—viz. one room and a closet —at Bangor.

My landlady had been a lady's-maid, or a nurse, or something of that sort, in the Bishop of Bangor's family; and had but lately married away from that family, or (to use her own expression) had "settled." In a little town like Bangor, barely to have lived in the bishop's family conferred some distinction; and my good landlady had rather more than her share of the pride natural to that glorious advantage. What "my lord" said, and what "my lord" did, how useful he was in Parliament, and how indispensable at Oxford, formed the daily burden of her talk. All this I bore very well; for it cost no great effort to make allowance for the garrulity of an old servant; and luckily nothing in our daily routine of life brought us often into each other's company. Sometimes, however, we met; and of necessity, on such occasions, I must have appeared in her eyes very inadequately impressed with the bishop's importance, and with the grandeur of having lived in a palace; and, perhaps, to punish me for my indifference, or it might, after all, be mere accident, she one day repeated to me a conversation in which I was indirectly a party concerned. She had been to the palace; and, dinner being over, she had been summoned into the dining-room. In giving an account of her household economy, she happened to mention that she had let what she styled somewhat magnificently her "apartments." The good bishop (it seemed) had thence taken occasion to caution her as to her selection of inmates; "for," said he, "you must recollect, Betty, that Bangor is in the high road to the Head" (*the Head* was the common colloquial expression for Holyhead), "so that multitudes of Irish swindlers, running away from their debts into England, and of English

proportion of the "conversions" in the case of Wordsworth took place under the same influence.

swindlers, running away from their debts to the Isle of Man, are likely to take this place in their route." Such advice was certainly not without reasonable grounds, but rather fitted to be stored up for Mrs. Betty's private meditations than specially reported to me. What followed was worse :— "O my lord," answered my landlady (according to her own representation of the matter), "I really don't think that this young gentleman is a swindler ; because——" — "You don't *think* me a swindler?" said I, interrupting her, in a tumult of indignation ; "for the future I shall spare you the trouble of thinking about it." And without delay I prepared for my departure. Some concessions the good woman seemed disposed to make ; but a harsh and contemptuous expression, which I fear that I applied to the learned dignitary himself, roused *her* indignation in turn ; and reconciliation then became impossible. I was, indeed, greatly irritated at the bishop's having suggested any grounds of suspicion, however remotely, against a person whom he had never seen ; and I thought of letting him know my mind in Greek ; which, at the same time that it would furnish some presumption in behalf of my respectability, might also (I hoped) compel the bishop to answer in the same language ; and in that case I doubted not to make good my superiority, as a versatile wielder of arms rarely managed with effect, against all the terrors of his lordship's wig.

I was wrong if I said anything in my anger that was disparaging or sceptical as to the bishop's intellectual pretensions ; which were not only very sound, but very appropriate to the particular stations which he filled. For the Bishop of Bangor (at that time Dr. Cleaver) was also the head of Brasenose, Oxford—which college was indebted to him for its leadership [1] at that era in scholarship and dis-

[1] The rank to which Brasenose had suddenly risen in the estimation of the world was put to the test in the following year. The leading family in the house (the *gens*) of Grenville was, at this time, that of the Marquis of Buckingham, not long after elevated to the ducal rank. The second son of this nobleman—viz. Lord George Grenville (subsequently succeeding to the peerage of Nugent, and known in his literary character only as Lord Nugent)—happened, in this or the following year, to be ripe for college ; which means, in England, that he was a young man, and not a boy ; generally, at the very least.

cipline. In this academic character I learned afterwards that he might be called almost a reformer,—a wise, temperate, and successful reformer; and, as a scholar, I saw many years later that he had received the laudatory notice of Porson. But, on the other hand, the Bishop was not altogether without blame in unchaining his local influence, were it only by hint or insinuation, against a defenceless stranger. For so great a man, in so small a town as Bangor, was really as much of an autocrat as a post-captain on the quarterdeck of his own vessel. A "sea-lawyer" in such a case must contrive to pocket his wrongs, until he finds himself and the captain on shore. Yet, after all, my scheme was not altogether so absurd; and the anger, in which perhaps it might begin, all melted away in the fun which would have accompanied its execution. It will strike the reader that my plan of retaliation must have failed by arming against me the official pride of the Bishop. Any man, it will be thought, occupying

eighteen years old. According to all known precedent, he should have gone to Christ Church. But, on such a question arising, naturally his uncle, Lord Grenville, under whose patronage the Grenville "Homer" had been published, and who was reputed an accomplished scholar, assisted at the family council; and by *his* advice, to the astonishment of Oxford, Brasenose was selected in preference to Christ Church; and, I believe, on the one sole ground of deference for the administrative talents (combined with singular erudition) of Dr. Cleaver. This casual precedency, however, of Brasenose, resting (as it did) on a mere *personal* basis, ran down as suddenly as it had run up, and has long since been forgotten. The fact is that rustic families, at a distance from Oxford, naturally presume some superior dignity in any college that should happen to have a bishop for its ruler; not knowing that, in Oxford and Cambridge, all heads of considerable colleges hold themselves (and *are* held) equals in rank and dignity to the bench of bishops. In Oxford more especially this doctrine receives a standing illustration; for *there* the dean of the diocese is necessarily and *ex officio* the head of Christ Church, which (by the number and the rank of its population) is beyond all competition the supreme college in the whole university. In that character, therefore (of college head), Mr. Dean is a very much greater man than my lord the Bishop. This virtual inferiority in the face of an ostensible superiority was, until the new regulations for somewhat equalising the bishoprics, further reinforced by the poverty of Oxford as an episcopal see. It ought to be added that to hold the headship of a college in combination with a bishopric, considering the burdensomeness of irreconcilable functions attached to each of the offices, is a scandalous violation of public duty, such as ought never to have won an hour's toleration.

so dignified a place in public life—a lord of Parliament, holder of a prize in the episcopal lottery (for Bangor was worth six thousand a-year), a leading Don at Oxford—in short, a splendid pluralist, armed with diocesan thunder and lightning—would never stoop from his Jovian altitude to notice any communication whatever from a boy. But it would make all the difference in the world that this communication by the supposition was to be in Greek. Mere curiosity in such a case would compel the Bishop to read it. And then, shockingly irregular as such a course would be, a fatal temptation would arise to the hazardous experiment of answering it in Greek. It would not be pleasant to shrink from the sort of silent challenge thrown out by such an eccentric form of epistle, when worded in the tone of respect due to the Bishop's age and spiritual office. And certainly the degradation would be conspicuously less in replying even to a boy, if armed with that sort of accomplishment. But was not the Bishop a learned man, well qualified to answer, whose reading must naturally be greater by a score of times than mine? I had heard so; and I was told also, but long after, that he had written well and learnedly (*but not in Greek*) on the Arundel marbles; even to attempt which, in our days, when the forestalling labours of two centuries have so much narrowed the field open to original sagacity, argues an erudition far from common. But I have already given it as my opinion that there is no proportion held between a man's general knowledge of Greek and the special art of writing Greek; that is, using it as a vehicle for ordinary and familiar intercourse. This advantage, not necessarily or usually belonging to the most exquisite Greek scholarship, I myself wielded with a preternatural address for varying the forms of expression, and for bringing the most refractory ideas within the harness of Grecian phraseology. Had the Bishop yielded to the temptation of replying, then I figured to myself the inevitable result—the episcopal hulk lying motionless on the water like a huge three-decker, not able to return a gun, whilst I, as a light agile frigate, should have sailed round and round him, and raked him at pleasure as opportunity offered. He could have had no opening for his erudition (as, for instance, upon the Arundel marbles), without too flagrantly recalling the cosmogony man in the

"Vicar of Wakefield," with his ἄναρχον ἄρα καὶ ἀτελεύταιον τὸ πᾶν. Once falling into the snare of replying at all, his lordship would not be at liberty either to break off the correspondence abruptly, or to continue it without damage to his episcopal pomp. My anger, meantime, sudden and fiery, as under a sense of real injury, had not been malicious; and it was already propitiated beforehand by the mere fun and comic effect of the picture which I thus prefigured as arising between us. In no case could I have found pleasure in causing any mortifications to the Bishop — mortifications which the Methodists (by this time swarming in Carnarvonshire) would exultingly have diffused. In the end I should probably have confined myself to a grave and temperate remonstrance, simply stating the distressing consequences which were likely to result to me from the too unguarded insinuations of his lordship.

But these consequences travelled fast upon the traces of those insinuations; and already, upon the very day when my foolish landlady (more, perhaps, in thoughtlessness than with any purpose of mischief) had repeated the Bishop's words in what seemed to me so insulting a tone, and so entirely without provocation (since there never had been the smallest irregularity in our little weekly settlements), one of those consequences was that I became houseless. For I disdained to profit by the shelter of a house from which truth and courtesy seemed alike banished. And from that one consequence naturally enough flowed others; for, having, at any rate, to seek a new home, I left Bangor[1] at once, and rambled away to Carnarvon — distant about two-and-a-half hours' smart walking.

[1] In this, except for what concerned the cheapness and the brilliant cleanliness of the lodgings, under the management of an English housemaid approved by an English bishop's housekeeper, there was little to regret. Bangor, indeed, had few attractions, fewer than any other spot in Carnarvonshire. And yet, was there not the cathedral? Certainly there was; and that might have been a great resource to me had there been the regular choir services; but there were none. Indeed, there could be none; for, so far as I ever heard, there was no choir. The cathedral cemetery was at that time famous as the most beautiful in the whole kingdom. But the beauty was scarcely appropriate: it was the beauty of a well-kept shrubbery, and not of a cemetery. It contrived to look smiling and attractive by the entire dissembling of its real purposes.

At Carnarvon I found no lodging that altogether suited my purposes,—hired lodgings being then thinly sown in North Wales; and for some time, therefore, having a small reserve of guineas, I lived very much at inns.

This change of abode naturally drew my thoughts away from the Bishop. And thus gradually all my thoughts of expostulation faded away. This I am disposed to regard as an unfortunate solution of the affair, which otherwise would probably have taken the following course:—The Bishop, as I afterwards heard when resident myself at Oxford and personally acquainted with men of Brasenose (to which college, indeed, subsequently, my own youngest brother belonged), was a reasonable and even amiable man. On receiving, therefore, my Greek remonstrance, he was sure as a scholar to have taken some interest in the writer; and he was too equitable to have neglected any statement, Greek or not Greek, which reflected, with some apparent justice, upon his own conduct as not sufficiently considerate. He would, therefore, almost certainly have replied to me in courteous terms; regretting the accident which had made me houseless; but reminding me that all communications made to a dependent within a man's own gates, and never meant as grounds of action, but simply as cautions—general and not special—are in law and usage held to be privileged communications, and equally whether written or spoken. The insulting use made of this caution he would have treated as due simply to the woman's coarseness, but in part, perhaps, as due to a cause which has much to do with the harsh and uncivil expressions of uneducated people—viz., their very limited command of language. They use phrases much stronger than naturally belong to their thoughts and meaning, simply because the narrowness of their vocabulary oftentimes suggests to their embarrassed choice no variation of expression wearing a character less offensive. To such a letter I should have made a suitable reply; and, thenceforward, it is probable that, until the Michaelmas term drew the Bishop's family away to Oxford, I should have found my abode in Bangor, or its neighbourhood, much improved as regards the command of books. That advantage would have been fugitive. But other and remoter advantages might have been more serious.

It happened that the college to which the Manchester Grammar School would have consigned me as a privileged *alumnus* was that very college over which the Bishop presided. I have no reason to think that the Bishop would have had power to retrieve for me any part of the privileges which by my elopement I had wilfully forfeited: but he would have had it abundantly in his power to place the ordinary college advantages of Fellowships, &c., within my reach: whereas afterwards, going under erroneous counsel to a college disconnected from my own county and my own schools,[1] I never enjoyed those ordinary opportunities of advancement, and consequently of literary leisure, which the English universities open to almost every man who qualifies himself duly to obtain them. All this, however, was thrown into the world of dreams and fable by my hasty movement to Carnarvon, and that region which Pennant first distinguished by the name of Snowdonia.

There were already, even in those days of 1802, numerous inns, erected at reasonable distances from each other, for the accommodation of tourists: and no sort of disgrace attached in Wales, as too generally upon the great roads of England, to the pedestrian style of travelling. Indeed, the majority of those whom I met as fellow-tourists in the quiet little cottage-parlours of the Welsh posting-houses were pedestrian travellers. All the way from Shrewsbury through Llangollen, Llanrwst,[2] Conway, Bangor, then turning to the left at right angles through Carnarvon, and so on to Dolgelly (the chief town of Merionethshire), Tan-y-Bwlch, Harlech, Barmouth, and through the sweet solitudes of Cardiganshire, or turning back sharply towards the English border through the gorgeous wood scenery of Montgomeryshire—everywhere, at intermitting distances of twelve to sixteen miles, I found the most comfortable inns. One feature indeed of repose in all this chain of solitary resting-houses—viz. the fact that none of them rose above two storeys in height—was due to the modest scale on which the travelling system of the Princi-

[1] *i.e.* to Worcester College. See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 29.—M.

[2] "*Llanrwst*":—This is an alarming word for the eye; one vowel to what the English eye counts as seven consonants: but it is easily pronounced as *Tlanroost*.

pality had moulded itself in correspondence to the calls of England, which then (but be it remembered this *then* was in 1802, a year of peace) threw a very small proportion of her vast migratory population annually into this sequestered channel. No huge Babylonian centres of commerce towered into the clouds on these sweet sylvan routes: no hurricanes of haste, or fever-stricken armies of horses and flying chariots, tormented the echoes in these mountain recesses. And it has often struck me that a world-wearied man, who sought for the peace of monasteries separated from their gloomy captivity —peace and silence such as theirs, combined with the large liberty of nature—could not do better than revolve amongst these modest inns in the five northern Welsh counties of Denbigh, Montgomery, Carnarvon, Merioneth, and Cardigan. Sleeping, for instance, and breakfasting at Carnarvon; then, by an easy nine-mile walk, going forwards to dinner at Bangor, thence to Aber,—nine miles; or to Llanberris; and so on for ever, accomplishing seventy to ninety or one hundred miles in a week. This, upon actual experiment, and for week after week, I found the most delightful of lives. Here was the eternal motion of winds and rivers, or of the Wandering Jew liberated from the persecution which compelled him to move and turned his breezy freedom into a killing captivity. Happier life I cannot imagine than this vagrancy, if the weather were but tolerable, through endless successions of changing beauty, and towards evening a courteous welcome in a pretty rustic home—that, having all the luxuries of a fine hotel (in particular some luxuries[1] that are almost sacred to alpine regions), was at the same time liberated from the inevitable accompaniments of such hotels in great cities or at great travelling stations—viz. the tumult and uproar.

Life on this model was but too delightful; and to myself especially, that am never thoroughly in health unless when having pedestrian exercise to the extent of fifteen miles at the most, and eight to ten miles at the least. Living thus, a man earned his daily enjoyment. But what did it cost? About

[1] But a luxury of another class, and quite peculiar to Wales, was in those days (I hope in these) the Welsh harp, in attendance at every inn.

half-a-guinea a-day: whilst my boyish allowance was not a third of this. The flagrant health, health boiling over in fiery rapture, which ran along, side by side, with exercise on this scale, whilst all the while from morning to night I was inhaling mountain air, soon passed into a hateful scourge. Perquisites to servants and a bed would have absorbed the whole of my weekly guinea. My policy therefore was, if the autumnal air were warm enough, to save this expense of a bed and the chambermaid by sleeping amongst ferns or furze upon a hillside; and perhaps, with a cloak of sufficient *weight* as well as compass, or an Arab's burnoose, this would have been no great hardship. But then in the daytime what an oppressive burden to carry! So perhaps it was as well that I had no cloak at all. I did, however, for some weeks try the plan of carrying a canvas tent manufactured by myself, and not larger than an ordinary umbrella: but to pitch this securely I found difficult; and on windy nights it became a troublesome companion. As winter drew near, this bivouacking system became too dangerous to attempt. Still one may bivouack decently, barring rain and wind, up to the end of October. And I counted, on the whole, that in a fortnight I spent nine nights abroad. There are, as perhaps the reader knows by experience, no jaguars in Wales—nor pumas—nor anacondas—nor (generally speaking) any Thugs. What I feared most, but perhaps only through ignorance of zoology, was lest, whilst my sleeping face was upturned to the stars, some one of the many little Brahminical-looking cows on the Cambrian hills, one or other, might poach her foot into the centre of my face. I do not suppose any fixed hostility of that nature to English faces in Welsh cows: but everywhere I observe in the feminine mind something of beautiful caprice, a floral exuberance of that charming wilfulness which characterises our dear human sisters, I fear, through all worlds. Against Thugs I had Juvenal's license to be careless in the emptiness of my pockets (*cantabit vacuus*[1] *coram latrone viator*).

[1] "*Vacuus*":—I am afraid, though many a year has passed since last I read Juvenal, that the true classical sense of *vacuus* is *careless, clear from all burden of anxiety*, so that *vacuitas* will be the *result* of immunity from robbery. But suffer me to understand it in the sense of *free from the burden of property;* in which sense *vacuitas* would be

But I fear that Juvenal's license will not always hold water. There are people bent upon cudgelling one who will persist in excusing one's having nothing but a bad shilling in one's purse, without reading in that Juvenalian *vacuitas* any privilege or license of exemption from the general fate of travellers that intrude upon the solitude of robbers.

Dr. Johnson, upon some occasion which I have forgotten, is represented by his biographers as accounting for an undeserving person's success in these terms: "Why, I suppose that *his* nonsense suited *their* nonsense." Can *that* be the humiliating solution of my own colloquial success at this time in Carnarvonshire inns? Do not suggest such a thought, most courteous reader. No matter: won in whatsoever way, success *is* success; and even nonsense, if it is to be victorious nonsense—victorious over the fatal habit of yawning in those who listen, and in some cases over the habit of disputing—must involve a deeper art or more effective secret of power than is easily attained. Nonsense, in fact, is a very difficult thing. Not every seventh son of a seventh son (to use Milton's words) is equal to the task of keeping and maintaining a company of decent men in orthodox nonsense for a matter of two hours. Come from what fountain it may, all talk that succeeds to the extent of raising a wish to meet the talker again must contain *salt;* must be seasoned with some flavouring element pungent enough to neutralise the natural tendencies of all mixed conversation, not vigilantly tended, to lose itself in insipidities and platitudes. Above all things, I shunned, as I would shun a pestilence, Coleridge's capital error, which through life he practised, of keeping the audience in a state of passiveness. Unjust this was to others, but most of all to himself. This eternal stream of talk which never for one instant intermitted, and allowed no momentary opportunity of reaction to the persecuted and baited auditor, was absolute ruin to the interests of the talker himself. Always passive, always acted upon, never allowed to react, into what state did the poor afflicted listener—he that played the *rôle* of listener—collapse? He returned home in the

the *cause* of such an immunity. [In that sense the line from Juvenal may be translated thus:—"An empty-pocketed tramp will sing in the face of a robber."—M.]

exhausted condition of one that has been drawn up just before death from the bottom of a well occupied by foul gases; and, of course, hours before he had reached that perilous point of depression, he had lost all power of distinguishing, understanding, or connecting. I, for my part, without needing to think of the unamiable arrogance involved in such a habit, simply on principles of deadliest selfishness, should have avoided thus incapacitating my hearer from doing any justice to the rhetoric or the argument with which I might address him.

Some great advantages I had for colloquial purposes, and for engaging the attention of people wiser than myself. Ignorant I was in a degree past all imagination of daily life —even as it exists in England. But, on the other hand, having the advantage of a prodigious memory, and the far greater advantage of a logical instinct for feeling in a moment the secret analogies or parallelisms that connected things else apparently remote, I enjoyed these two peculiar gifts for conversation: first, an inexhaustible fertility of topics, and therefore of resources for illustrating or for varying any subject that chance or purpose suggested; secondly, a prematurely awakened sense of *art* applied to conversation. I had learned the use of vigilance in evading with civility the approach of wearisome discussions, and in impressing, quietly and oftentimes imperceptibly, a new movement upon dialogues that loitered painfully, or see-sawed unprofitably. That it was one function of art to hide and mask itself (*artis est artem celare*), this I well knew. Neither was there much art required. The chief demand was for new facts, or new views, or for views newly-coloured impressing novelty upon old facts. To throw in a little of the mysterious every now and then was useful, even with those that by temperament were averse to the mysterious; pointed epigrammatic sayings and jests—even somewhat worn—were useful; a seasonable quotation in verse was always effective; and illustrative anecdotes diffused a grace over the whole movement of the dialogue. It would have been coxcombry to practise any elaborate or any conspicuous art: few and simple were any artifices that I ever employed; but, being hidden and seasonable, they were often effective. And the whole result was

that I became exceedingly popular within my narrow circle of friends. This circle was necessarily a fluctuating one, since it was mainly composed of tourists that happened to linger for a few weeks in or near Snowdonia, making their headquarters at Bethgellert or Carnarvon, or at the utmost roaming no farther than the foot of Cader Idris.

Amongst these fugitive members of our society, I recollect with especial pleasure Mr. De Haren, an accomplished young German, who held, or *had* held, the commission of lieutenant in our British navy, but now, in an interval of peace, was seeking to extend his knowledge of England, and also of the English language; though in *that*, as regarded the fullest command of it colloquially, he had little indeed to learn. From him it was that I obtained my first lessons in German and my first acquaintance with German literature. Paul Richter I then first heard of, together with Hippel, a humourist admired by Kant, and Hamann, also classed as a humourist, but a nondescript writer, singularly obscure, whom I have never since seen in the hands of any Englishman, except once of Sir William Hamilton. With all these writers Mr. De Haren had the means of making me usefully acquainted in the small portable library which filled one of his trunks.

But the most stationary members of this semi-literary circle were Welshmen; two of them lawyers, one a clergyman. This last had been regularly educated at Oxford—as a member of Jesus (the Welsh college)—and was a man of extensive information. The lawyers had not enjoyed the same advantages, but they had read diligently, and were interesting companions. Wales, as is pretty well known, breeds a population somewhat litigious. I do not think the worse of them for *that*. The martial Butlers and the heroic Talbots of the fifteenth century, having no regular opening for their warlike fury in the seventeenth century, took to quarrelling with each other; and no letters are more bitter than those which to this day survive from the hostile correspondence of the brother Talbots contemporary with the last days of Shakspere.[1] One channel being closed against their

[1] See especially a book written by Sir Egerton Brydges (I forget the title) on the Peerage in the reign of James I. [The title of the

martial propensities, naturally they opened such others as circumstances made available. This temper, widely spread amongst the lower classes of the Welsh, made it a necessity that the lawyers should itinerate on market-days through all the principal towns in their districts. In those towns continually I met them ; and continually we renewed our literary friendship.

Meantime alternately I sailed upon the high-priced and the low-priced tack. So exceedingly cheap were provisions at that period, when the war taxation of Mr. Pitt was partially intermitting, that it was easy beyond measure upon any three weeks' expenditure, by living with cottagers, to save two guineas out of the three. Mr. De Haren assured me that even in an inn, and not in a poor man's cottage (but an unpretending rustic inn, where the mistress of the house took upon herself the functions of every possible servant in turn —cook, waiter, chambermaid, boots, ostler), he had passed a day or two ; and for what he considered a really elegant dinner, as regarded everything except the table equipage (that being rude and coarse), he had paid only sixpence. This very inn, about ten or twelve miles south of Dolgelly, I myself visited some time later ; and I found Mr. De Haren's account in all points confirmed : the sole drawback upon the comfort of the visitor being that the fuel was chiefly of green wood, and with a chimney that smoked. I suffered so much under this kind of smoke, which irritates and inflames the eyes more than any other, that on the following day reluctantly I took leave of that obliging pluralist the landlady, and really felt myself blushing on settling the bill, until I bethought me of the green wood, which, upon the whole, seemed to balance the account. I could not then, nor can I now, account for these preposterously low prices ; which same prices, strange to say, ruled (as Wordsworth and his sister often assured me) among the same kind of scenery—*i.e.* amongst the English Lakes—at the very same time. To account for it, as people often do, by alleging the

book, published in 1802, is *Memoirs of the Peers of England during the Reign of James the First ;* and the article in the book to which De Quincey refers is that at pp. 14-21 on the Talbots, Earls of Shrewsbury.—M.]

want of markets for agricultural produce, is crazy political economy ; since the remedy for paucity of markets, and consequent failure of competition, is, certainly not to sell at losing rates, but to forbear producing, and consequently not to sell at all.[1]

So cheap in fact were all provisions which one had any chance of meeting with in a labouring man's house that I found it difficult under such a roof to spend sixpence a-day. Tea or coffee there was none : and I did not at that period very much care for either. Milk, with bread (coarse, but more agreeable by much than the insipid *whity-grey* bread of

[1] Thirteen years later—viz. in the year of Waterloo—happening to walk through the whole Principality from south to north, beginning at Cardiff and ending at Bangor, I turned aside about twenty-five miles to inquire after the health of my excellent hostess, that determined pluralist and intense antipole of all possible sinecurists. I found her cleaning a pair of boots and spurs, and purposing (I rather think) to enter next upon the elegant office of greasing a horse's heels. In that design, however, she was thwarted for the present by myself and another tourist, who claimed her services in three or four other characters previously. I inquired after the chimney—was it still smoking? She seemed surprised that it had ever been suspected of anything criminal ; so, as it was not a season for fires, I said no more. But I saw plenty of green wood, and but a small proportion of peats. I fear, therefore, that this, the state-room of the whole concern, still poisons the peace of the unhappy tourists. One personal indemnification, meantime, I must mention which this little guilty room made to me on that same night for all the tears it had caused me to shed. It happened that there was a public dance held at this inn on this very night. I therefore retired early to my bedroom, having had so long a walk, and not wishing to annoy the company, or the excellent landlady, who had, I daresay, to play the fiddle to the dancers. The noise and uproar were almost insupportable ; so that I could not sleep at all. At three o'clock all became silent, the company having departed in a body. Suddenly from the little parlour, separated from my bedroom overhead by the slightest and most pervious of ceilings, arose with the rising dawn the very sweetest of female voices* perhaps that ever I had heard, although for many years an *habitué* of the opera. She was a stranger ; a visitor from some distance ; and (I was told in the morning) a Methodist. What she sang, or at least sang last, were the beautiful verses of Shirley, ending—

> "Only the actions of the just
> Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust."

*This incident caused me to forget and forgive the wicked little chimney.

towns), potatoes if one wished, and also a little goat's, or kid's, flesh—these composed the cottager's choice of viands; not luxurious, but palatable enough to a person who took much exercise. And, if one wished, fresh-water fish could be had cheap enough; especially trout of the very finest quality. In these circumstances, I never found it easy to spend even five shillings (no, not three shillings, unless whortleberries or fish had been bought) in one week. And thus it was easy enough to create funds for my periodical transmigrations back into the character of gentleman-tourist. Even the half of five shillings I could not always find means to spend: for in some families, raised above dependence upon daily wages, when I performed any services in the way of letter-writing, I found it impossible at times to force any money at all upon them. Once, in particular, near the small lake of Talyllyn (so written, I believe, but pronounced Taltlyn), in a sequestered part of Merionethshire, I was entertained for upwards of three days by a family of young people, with an affectionate and fraternal kindness that left an impression upon my heart not yet impaired. The family consisted, at that time, of four sisters and three brothers, all grown up, and remarkable for elegance and delicacy of manners. So much beauty, or so much native good breeding and refinement, I do not remember to have seen before or since in any cottage, except once or twice in Westmoreland and Devonshire. They spoke English; an accomplishment not often met with in so many members of one Welsh family, especially in villages remote from the high road. Here I wrote, on my first introduction, a letter about prize-money for one of the brothers, who had served on board an English man-of-war; and, more privately, two letters to sweethearts for two of the sisters. They were both interesting in appearance; and one of uncommon loveliness. In the midst of their confusion and blushes, whilst dictating, or rather giving me general instructions, it did not require any great penetration to discover that they wished their letters to be as kind as was consistent with proper maidenly reserve. I contrived so to temper my expressions as to reconcile the gratification of both feelings; and they were as much pleased with the way in which I had given expression to their thoughts as

(in their simplicity) they were astonished at my having so readily discovered them. The reception one meets with from the women of a family generally determines the tenor of one's whole entertainment. In this case I had discharged my confidential duties as secretary so much to the general satisfaction, perhaps also amusing them with my conversation, that I was pressed to stay; and pressed with a cordiality which I had little inclination to resist. I slept unavoidably with the brothers, the only unoccupied bed standing in the chamber of the young women: but in all other points they treated me with a respect not usually paid to purses as light as mine; making it evident that my scholarship and courteous demeanour were considered sufficient arguments of gentle blood. Thus I lived with them for three days, and great part of a fourth; and, from the undiminished kindness which they continued to show me, I believe that I might have stayed with them up to this time, if their power had corresponded with their wishes. On the last morning, however, I perceived upon their countenances, as they sat at breakfast, the approach of some unpleasant communication; and soon after one of the brothers explained to me that, on the day before my arrival, their parents had gone to an annual meeting of Methodists, held at Carnarvon,[1] and in the course of that day were expected to return; "and, if they should not be so civil as they ought to be," he begged, on the part of all the young people, that I would not take it amiss. The parents returned with churlish faces, and "*Dym Sassenach*" (*no English*) in answer to all my addresses. I saw how matters stood; and so, taking an affectionate leave of my kind and interesting young hosts, I went my way. For, though they spoke warmly to their parents on my behalf, and often excused the manner of the old people by saying that it was "only their way," yet I easily understood that

[1] "*At Carnarvon*":—It was on this occasion that I learned how vague are the ideas of *number* in unpractised minds. "What number of people, do you think," said I to an elderly person, "will be assembled this day at Carnarvon?"—"What number?" rejoined the person addressed—"what number? Well, really now, I should reckon—perhaps a matter of four millions." Four millions of *extra* people in little Carnarvon, that could barely find accommodation (I should calculate) for an extra four hundred.

my talent for writing love-letters would do as little to recommend me with two sexagenarian Welsh Methodists as my Greek Sapphics or Alcaics; and what had been hospitality, when offered with the gracious courtesy of my young friends, would become charity, when connected with the harsh demeanour of their parents.

About this time—just when it was becoming daily more difficult to eke out the weekly funds for high-priced inns by the bivouacking system—as if some overmastering fiend, some instinct of migration, sorrowful but irresistible, were driving me forth to wander like the unhappy Io of the Grecian mythus, some oestrus of hidden persecution that bade me fly when no man pursued—not in false hope, for my hopes whispered but a doubtful chance—not in reasonable fear, for all was sweet pastoral quiet and autumnal beauty around me,—suddenly I took a fierce resolution to sacrifice my weekly allowance, to slip my anchor, and to throw myself in desperation upon London. Not to make the case more frantic than it really was, let the reader remember what it was that I found grievous in my present position, and upon what possibilities it was that I relied for bettering it. With a more extended knowledge of life than I at that time had, it would not have been so hopeless a speculation for a boy having my accomplishments to launch himself on the boundless ocean of London. I possessed attainments that bore a money value. For instance, as a "*Reader*" to the Press in the field of Greek re-publications, I might perhaps have earned a livelihood. But these chances, which I really had, never occurred to me in the light of useful resources; or, to speak the truth, they were unknown to me: and those which I chiefly relied on were most unlikely to prove available.

But what, meantime, was it that I complained of in the life that I was at present living? It was this: the dilemma proposed to my choice was that, if I *would*—positively *would*—have society, I must live at inns. But, if I reconciled myself to a quiet stationary abode in some village or hamlet, in that case for *me*, so transcendently careless about diet, my weekly guinea would have procured all that I wanted, and in some houses the advantage, quite indispensable to my comfort, of a private sitting-room. Yet even here the expense

was most needlessly enhanced by the aristocratic luxuriousness of our English system, which presumes it impossible for a gentleman to sleep in his sitting-room. On this footing, however, I might perhaps have commanded clean and comfortable accommodations in some respectable families, to whom my noiseless habits, and my respectful courtesy to women, would have recommended me as a desirable inmate. But the deadly drawback on this scheme was the utter want of access to books, or (generally speaking) to any intellectual intercourse. I languished all the day through, and all the week through—with nothing whatever, not so much as the county newspaper once in seven days to relieve my mortal ennui.

I have told the reader how inexplicably cheap was the life in poor men's cottages. But this did not affect the prices at the first-class hotels, where only I had any chance of meeting society. Those, and chiefly on the plea that the season was so brief, charged London prices. To meet such prices, it would no longer be possible, as winter came on, to raise one-half the funds by passing half the time in a less costly mode. There was an end of any feasible plan for interleaving days of hardship with days of ease and intellectual luxury. Meantime, whilst this perplexity was resounding in one ear, in the other were continually echoing the kind offers of my Welsh friends, especially the two lawyers, to furnish me with any money which I might think necessary for my visit to London. Twelve guineas, at length, I mentioned as probably enough. This they lent me on the spot. And now, all at once, I was—ready for London.

My farewell to the Principality was in the same unassuming character of pedestrian tourist as that in which I had entered it *Impedimenta* of any kind—that is, the encumbrances of horse or baggage—I had none even to the last. Where I pleased, and *when* I pleased, I could call a halt. My last halt of any duration was at Oswestry. Mere accident carried me thither, and accident very naturally in so small a town threw me across the path of the very warmest amongst my Welsh friends, who, as it turned out, resided there. He, by mere coercion of kindness, detained me for several days; for denial he would not take. Being as yet

unmarried, he could not vivify the other attractions of his most hospitable abode by the reinforcement of female society. His own, however, coming recommended as it did by the graces of a youthful frankness and a kindling intellect, was all-sufficient for the beguiling of the longest day. This Welsh friend was one of many whom I have crossed in life, chained by early accident or by domestic necessity to the calls of a professional service, whilst all the while his whole nature, wild and refractory, ran headlong into intellectual channels that could not be trained into reconciliation with his hourly duties. His library was already large, and as select as under the ordinary chances of provincial book-collection could be reasonably expected. For generally one-half, at the least, of a young man's library in a provincial town may be characterised as a mere dropping or deposition from local accidents, a casual windfall of fruits stripped and strewed by the rough storms of bankruptcy. In many cases, again, such a provincial library will represent simply that part of the heavy baggage which many a family, on removing to some distant quarter, has shrunk from the cost of transporting,—books being amongst the heaviest of household goods. Sometimes also, though more rarely, it happens that,—an ancient family, dying out, having unavoidably left to executors the duty of selling every chattel attached to its ancient habits of life,—suddenly with meteoric glare there emerges from its hiding-place of centuries some great jewel of literature, a First Folio of the 1623 Shakspere, an uncastrated *Decamerone*, or other dazzling *κειμήλιον*. And thus it is that a large provincial library, though naturally and peacefully accumulated, yet sometimes shows mute evidence of convulsions and household tragedies; speaks as if by records of storms, and through dim mementoes of half-forgotten shipwrecks. Real shipwrecks present often such incoherent libraries on the floors of the hungry sea. Magnificent is the library that sleeps unvexed by criticism at the bottom of the ocean, Indian or Atlantic, from the mere annual contributions and keepsakes, the never-ending *Forget-me-nots*, of mighty English Indiamen. The Halsewell, with its sad parting between the captain and his daughters, the Grosvenor, the Winterton, the Abergavenny, and scores of vessels on the same scale, with populations varying by

births, deaths, and marriages, populations large as cities, and rich as gold mines, capable of factions and rebellions, all and each have liberally patronised, by the gift of many *Large-Paper* copies, that vast submarine Bodleian, which stands in far less risk from fire than the insolent Bodleian of the upper world. This private Oswestry library wore something of the same wild tumultuary aspect, fantastic and disordinate, but was not for that reason the less attractive; everything was there that you never expected to meet anywhere, but certainly not to meet in company; so that, what between the library and the mercurial conversation of its proprietor, elated by the rare advantage of fraternal sympathy, I was in danger of finding attractions strong enough to lay me asleep over the proprieties of the case, or even to set me a-dreaming over imaginary cases. In fact, I had some excuse for doing so; since I knew very imperfectly the common routine of my friend's life; and, from *his* lofty Castilian sense of the obligations imposed by the great goddess Hospitality, I never should have been suffered to guess at the extent in which I was now gradually and unconsciously coming daily into collision with the regular calls upon his time. To ride off, under mask of "business," upon a circuit of a week, would, in *his* eyes, have been *virtually*, as regards the result,—meanly and evasively, as regards the mode,—to turn me out of his house. He would sooner have died. But in the meantime an accident, which revealed to me the true state of things, or at least revealed a suspicion of it, all at once armed my sense of delicacy against any further lingering. Suddenly and peremptorily I announced my departure—*that*, and the mode of it. For a long time he fought with unaffected zeal against my purpose, as nowise essential to his own free action. But at last, seeing that I was in earnest, he forbore to oppose my plan, contenting himself with guiding and improving its details. My plan had been to walk over the border into England, as far as Shrewsbury (distant from Oswestry, I think, about eighteen miles), and there to ascend any of the heavy stages which would convey me cheaply to Birmingham —the grand focus to which all the routes of England in its main central area converge. Any such plan moved on the assumption that rain would be falling steadily and heavily—

a reasonable assumption at the close of November. But, in the possible event of fair weather lasting over four or five days, what should prevent me from traversing the whole distance on foot? It is true that the aristocratic scowl of the landlord might be looked for as a customary salutation at the close of each day's journey; but, unless at solitary posting-houses, this criminal fact of having advanced by base pedestrian methods, known only to patriarchs of older days and to modern "*tramps*" (so they are called in solemn acts of Parliament), is easily expiated and cleansed by distributing your dust, should you fortunately have any to show, amongst the streets that you have invaded as a stranger. Happily the scandal of pedestrianism is in one respect more hopefully situated than that of scrofula or leprosy; it is not in any case written in your face. The man who is guilty of pedestrianism, on entering any town whatever, by the simple artifice of diving into the crowds of those untainted by that guilt, will emerge, for all practical purposes, washed and re-baptized. The landlord, indeed, of any one inn knows that you did not reach *him* on horseback, or in a carriage; but you may have been visiting for weeks at the house of some distinguished citizen, whom it might be dangerous to offend; and you may even be favourably known at some other inn. Else, as a general imputation, undoubtedly pedestrianism, in the estimate of English landlords, carries with it the most awful shadow and shibboleth of the pariah. My Welsh friend knew this, and strongly urged me to take advantage of the public carriages, both on that motive and others. A journey of a hundred and eighty miles, as a pedestrian, would cost me nine or ten days; for which extent the mere amount of expenses at inns would more than defray the fare of the dearest carriage. To this there was no sound reply, except that corresponding expenses would arise, at any rate, on these nine or ten days, wherever I might be—in London, or on the road. However, as it seemed ungracious to offer too obstinate a resistance to suggestions prompted so entirely by consideration for my own comfort, I submitted to my friend's plan in all its details; one being that I should go by the Holyhead Mail, and not by any of the heavy coaches. This stipulation pointed to a novel feature in the machinery of travelling

just then emerging. The light coaches charged almost mail prices. But the heavy coaches were at that time beginning to assume a new and dreadful form. Locomotion was so prodigiously on the increase that, in order to meet its demands, the old form of coach (carrying at most six insides) was exchanging itself, on all great roads, for a long, boatlike vehicle, very much resembling our modern detestable *omnibus*, but without our modern improvements. This carriage was called a "*long coach*," and the passengers, twelve or fourteen insides, sat along the sides; and, as ventilation was little regarded in those days—the very existence of an atmosphere being usually ignored—it followed that the horrors of Governor Holwell's black cage at Calcutta were every night repeated, in smaller proportions, upon every great English road. It was finally agreed that I should leave Oswestry on foot, simply with a view to the best enjoyment of the lovely weather; but that, as the mail passed through Oswestry, my friend should secure a place for me the whole way to London, so as to shut out competitors.

The day on which I left Oswestry (convoyed for nearly five miles by my warmhearted friend) was a day of golden sunshine amongst the closing days of November. As truly as Jessica's moonlight ("Merchant of Venice"), this golden sunshine might be said to *sleep* upon the woods and the fields; so awful was the universal silence, so profound the death-like stillness. It was a day belonging to a brief and pathetic season of farewell summer resurrection, which, under one name or other, is known almost everywhere. In North America it is called the "Indian Summer." In North Germany and Midland Germany it is called the "Old Wives' Summer," and more rarely the "Girls' Summer." It is that last brief resurrection of summer in its most brilliant memorials, a resurrection that has no root in the past nor steady hold upon the future, like the lambent and fitful gleams from an expiring lamp, mimicking what is called the "lightning before death" in sick patients, when close upon their end. There is the feeling of a conflict that has been going on between the lingering powers of summer and the strengthening powers of winter, not unlike that which moves by antagonist forces in some deadly inflammation

hurrying forwards through fierce struggles into the final repose of mortification. For a time the equilibrium has been maintained between the hostile forces; but at last the antagonism is overthrown; the victory is accomplished for the powers that fight on the side of death; simultaneously with the conflict, the pain of conflict has departed: and thenceforward the gentle process of collapsing life, no longer fretted by countermovements, slips away with holy peace into the noiseless deeps of the Infinite. So sweet, so ghostly, in its soft, golden smiles, silent as a dream, and quiet as the dying trance of a saint, faded through all its stages this departing day, along the whole length of which I bade farewell for many a year to Wales, and farewell to summer. In the very aspect and the sepulchral stillness of the motionless day, as solemnly it wore away through morning, noontide, afternoon, to meet the darkness that was hurrying to swallow up its beauty, I had a fantastic feeling as though I read the very language of resignation when bending before some irresistible agency. And at intervals I heard — in how different a key!—the raving, the everlasting uproar, of that dreadful metropolis which at every step was coming nearer, and beckoning (as it seemed) to myself for purposes as dim, for issues as incalculable, as the path of cannon-shots fired at random and in darkness.

It was not late, but it was at least two hours after nightfall, when I reached Shrewsbury. Was I not liable to the suspicion of pedestrianism? Certainly I was: but, even if my criminality had been more unequivocally attested than it could be under the circumstances, still there is a *locus penitentiæ* in such a case. Surely a man may repent of *any* crime; and therefore of pedestrianism. I might have erred; and a court of *pié poudré* (dusty foot) might have found the evidences of my crime on my shoes. Yet secretly I might be forming good resolutions to do so no more. Certainly it looked like this, when I announced myself as a passenger "booked" for that night's mail. This character at once installed me as rightfully a guest of the inn, however profligate a life I might have previously led as a pedestrian. Accordingly I was received with special courtesy; and it so happened that I was received with something even like

pomp. Four wax-lights carried before me by obedient mutes, these were but ordinary honours, meant (as old experience had instructed me) for the first engineering step towards effecting a lodgment upon the stranger's purse. In fact the wax-lights are used by innkeepers, both abroad and at home, to "try the range of their guns." If the stranger submits quietly, as a good anti-pedestrian ought surely to do, and fires no counter gun by way of protest, then he is recognised at once as passively within range, and amenable to orders. I have always looked upon this fine of five or seven shillings (for wax that you do not absolutely need) as a sort of inaugural *honorarium*, entrance-money,—what in jails used to be known as *smart* money,—proclaiming me to be a man *comme il faut;* and no toll in this world of tolls do I pay so cheerfully. This, meantime, as I have said, was too customary a form to confer much distinction. The wax-lights, to use the magnificent Grecian phrase ἐπομπεύε, moved pompously before me, as the holy—holy fire, the inextinguishable fire and its golden hearth, moved before Cæsar *semper* Augustus, when he made his official or ceremonial *avatars*. Yet still this moved along the ordinary channels of glorification: it rolled along ancient grooves: I might say, indeed, like one of the twelve Cæsars when dying, *Ut puto, Deus fio* (It's my private opinion that at this very moment I am turning into a god); but still the metamorphosis was not complete. *That* was accomplished when I stepped into the sumptuous room allotted to me. It was a ball-room [1] of noble proportions—lighted, if I chose to issue orders, by three gorgeous chandeliers, not basely wrapped up in paper, but sparkling through all their thickets of crystal branches, and flashing back the soft rays of my tall waxen lights. There were, moreover, two orchestras, which money would have filled within thirty minutes. And, upon the whole, one thing only was wanting—viz. a throne—for the completion of my *apotheosis*.

[1] "*It was a ball-room*":—The explanation of the case was simply that the hotel was under some extensive process of purification, adornment, and, I believe, extension: and, under the accident of being myself on that particular night the sole visitor of the house, I slipped unavoidably into the honours of a semi-regal reception.

It might be seven P.M. when first I entered upon my kingdom. About three hours later I rose from my chair, and with considerable interest looked out into the night. For nearly two hours I had heard fierce winds arising; and the whole atmosphere had, by this time, become one vast laboratory of hostile movements in all directions. Such a chaos, such a distracting wilderness of dim sights, and of those awful "sounds that live in darkness" (Wordsworth's "Excursion"), never had I consciously witnessed. Rightly, and by a true instinct, had I made my farewell adieus to summer. All through the day, Wales and her grand mountain ranges —Penmaenmawr, Snowdon, Cader Idris—had divided my thoughts with London. But now rose London—sole, dark, infinite — brooding over the whole capacities of my heart. Other object, other thought, I could not admit. Long before midnight the whole household (with the exception of a solitary waiter) had retired to rest. Two hours, at least, were left to me, after twelve o'clock had struck, for heart-shaking reflections. More than ever I stood upon the brink of a precipice; and the local circumstances around me deepened and intensified these reflections, impressed upon them solemnity and terror, sometimes even horror. It is all but inconceivable to men of unyielding and callous sensibilities how profoundly others find their reveries modified and overruled by the external characters of the immediate scene around them. Many a suicide that hung dubiously in the balances has been ratified, and carried into summary effect, through the forlorn, soul-revolting aspect of a crazy, dilapidated home. Oftentimes, without extravagance, the whole difference between a mind that spurns life and the same mind reconciled to life turns upon the outside features of that particular domestic scenery which hourly besieges the eyes. I, in this Shrewsbury hotel, naturally contemplated a group of objects tending to far different results. And yet in some respects they agreed.

The unusual dimensions of the rooms, especially their towering height, brought up continually and obstinately, through natural links of associated feelings or images, the mighty vision of London waiting for me afar off. An altitude of nineteen or twenty feet showed itself unavoidably

upon an exaggerated scale in some of the smaller side-rooms, meant probably for cards or for refreshments. This single feature of the rooms—their unusual altitude, and the echoing hollowness which had become the exponent of that altitude—this one terrific feature (for terrific it was in the effect), together with crowding and evanescent images of the flying feet that so often had spread gladness through these halls on the wings of youth and hope at seasons when every room rang with music: all this, rising in tumultuous vision, whilst the dead hours of night were stealing along,—all around me, household and town, sleeping,—and whilst against the windows more and more the storm outside was raving, and to all appearance endlessly growing,—threw me into the deadliest condition of nervous emotion under contradictory forces, high over which predominated horror recoiling from that unfathomed abyss in London into which I was now so wilfully precipitating myself. Often I looked out and examined the night. Wild it was beyond all description, and dark as "the inside of a wolf's throat." But at intervals, when the wind, shifting continually, swept in such a direction as to clear away the vast curtain of vapour, the stars shone out, though with a light unusually dim and distant. Still, as I turned inwards to the echoing chambers, or outwards to the wild, wild night, I saw London expanding her visionary gates to receive me, like some dreadful mouth of Acheron (*Acherontis avari*). Thou also, Whispering Gallery! once again in those moments of conscious and wilful desolation didst to my ear utter monitorial sighs. For once again I was preparing to utter an irrevocable word, to enter upon one of those fatally tortuous paths of which the windings can never be unlinked.

Such thoughts, and visions without number corresponding to them, were moving across the *camera obscura* of my fermenting fancy, when suddenly I heard a sound of wheels; which, however, soon died off into some remote quarter. I guessed at the truth—viz. that it was the Holyhead Mail[1]

[1] The Holyhead Mail, depending in its earliest stages upon winds and waters (though not upon tides), could not realise the same exquisite accuracy as mails that moved exclusively upon land. Sixty miles of watery transit between Dublin and Holyhead were performed

wheeling off on its primary duty of delivering its bags at the post-office. In a few minutes it was announced as having changed horses; and off I was to London.

All the mails in the kingdom, with one solitary exception (that of Liverpool), in those days, were so arranged as to reach London early in the morning. Between the hours of four and six A.M., one after the other, according to their station upon the roll, all the mails from the N[orth], the E[ast], the W[est], the S[outh]—whence, according to some curious etymologists, comes the magical word *NEWS*—drove up successively to the post-office, and rendered up their heart-shaking budgets; none earlier than four o'clock, none later than six. I am speaking of days when all things moved slowly. The condition of the roads was then such that, in order to face it, a corresponding build of coaches hyperbolically massive was rendered necessary: the mails were upon principle made so strong as to be the heaviest of all carriages known to the wit or the experience of man; and, from these joint evils of ponderous coaches and roads that were quagmires, it was impossible for even the picked breed of English coach-horses, all bone and blood, to carry forward their huge tonnage at a greater rate than six-and-a-half miles an hour. Consequently, it cost eight-and-twenty massy hours for us, leaving Shrewsbury at two o'clock in the dead of night, to reach the General Post-office, and faithfully to deposit upon the threshing-floors of Lombard Street all that weight of love and hatred which Ireland had found herself able to muster through twenty-four hours in the great depôt of Dublin, by way of donation to England.

On reflection, I have done myself some injustice. Not

with miraculous precision. The packets were intrusted by the General Post-office to none but post-captains, who had commanded frigates. And the salaries were so high as to make these commands confessedly prizes in nautical life, and objects of keen competition. No evil, therefore, which care, foresight, and professional skill could remedy, was suffered to exist. Yet, after all, baffling winds would now and then (especially in three or four weeks *after* the equinox) make it impossible for the very ablest man, under the total defect of steam resources, to keep his time. Six hours, I believe, were allowed by the Post-office for the sixty miles; but at times this must have proved a very inadequate allowance.

altogether without a plan had I been from the first; and in coming along I had matured it. My success in such a plan would turn upon my chance of borrowing on personal security. £200, without counting any interest upon it, would subdivide into four sums of £50. Now, what interval was it that divided me from my majority? Simply an interval of four years. London, I knew or believed, was the dearest of all cities for three items of expenditure: (1) servants' wages; (2) lodgings[1]; (3) dairy produce. In other things, London was often cheaper than most towns. Now, in a London street, having no pretensions beyond those of decent respectability, it has always been possible for the last half-century to obtain two furnished rooms at a weekly cost of half-a-guinea. This sum (or say £25) deducted would leave me annually about the same sum for my other expenses. Too certainly I knew that this would suffice. If, therefore, I could obtain the £200, my plan was to withdraw from the knowledge of all my connexions until I should become *mei juris* by course of law. In such a case, it is true that I must have waived all the advantages, fancied or real, small or great, from residence at a university. But, as in fact I never drew the slightest advantage or emolument from any university, my scheme when realised would have landed me in the same point which finally I attained by its failure. The plan was simple enough, but it rested on the assumption that I could melt the obduracy of money-lenders. On this point I had both hopes and fears. But more irritating than either was the *delay* which eventually I came to recognise as an essential element in the policy of all money-lenders: in that way only can they raise up such claims on behalf of their law-agents as may be fitted for sustaining their zeal.

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[1] Not universally. Glasgow, if you travel from Hammerfest southwards (that is, from the northernmost point of Norway, or Swedish Lapland, traversing all latitudes of Europe to Gibraltar on the west, or Naples on the east), is the one dearest place for lodgings known to man. A decent lodging for a single person, in Edinburgh which could be had readily for half-a-guinea a-week, will in Glasgow cost a guinea. Glasgow, except as to servants, is a dearer abode than London.

I lost no time in opening the business which had brought me to London. By ten A.M., an hour when all men of business are presumed to be at their posts, personally or by proxy, I presented myself at the money-lender's office. My name was already known there: for I had, by letters from Wales, containing very plain and very accurate statements of my position in life and my pecuniary expectations (some of which statements it afterwards appeared that he had personally investigated and verified), endeavoured to win his favourable attention.

The money-lender, as it turned out, had one fixed rule of action. He never granted a personal interview to any man; no, not to the most beloved of his clients. One and all—myself, therefore, among the crowd—he referred for information, and for the means of prosecuting any kind of negotiation, to an attorney, who called himself, on most days of the week, by the name of Brunell, but occasionally (might it perhaps be on *red-letter* days?) by the more common name of Brown. Mr. Brunell-Brown, or Brown-Brunell, had located his hearth (if ever he had possessed one), and his household gods (when they were not in the custody of the sheriff), in Greek Street, Soho. The house was not in itself, supposing that its face had been washed now and then, at all disrespectable. But it wore an unhappy countenance of gloom and unsocial fretfulness, due in reality to the long neglect of painting, cleansing, and in some instances of repairing. There were, however, no fractured panes of glass in the windows; and the deep silence which invested the house, not only from the absence of all visitors, but also of those common household functionaries, bakers, butchers, beer-carriers, sufficiently accounted for the desolation, by suggesting an excuse not strictly true—viz. that it might be tenantless. The house already had tenants through the day, though of a noiseless order, and was destined soon to increase them.

Mr. Brown-Brunell, after reconnoitring me through a narrow side-window (such as is often attached to front-doors in London), admitted me cheerfully, and conducted me, as an honoured guest, to his private *officina diplomatum* at the back of the house. From the expression of his face, but much more from the contradictory and self-counteracting play of his

features, you gathered in a moment that he was a man who had much to conceal, and much, perhaps, that he would gladly forget. His eye expressed wariness against surprise, and passed in a moment into irrepressible glances of suspicion and alarm. No smile that ever his face naturally assumed but was pulled short up by some freezing counteraction, or was chased by some close-following expression of sadness. One feature there was of relenting goodness and nobleness in Mr. Brunell's character, to which it was that subsequently I myself was most profoundly indebted for an asylum that saved my life. He had the deepest, the most liberal, and unaffected love of knowledge, but, above all, of that specific knowledge which we call literature. His own stormy (and no doubt oftentimes disgraceful) career in life, that had entangled him in perpetual feuds with his fellow-men, he ascribed, with bitter imprecations, to the sudden interruption of his studies consequent upon his father's violent death, and to the necessity which threw him, at a boyish age, upon a professional life in the lower branches of law—threw him, therefore, upon daily temptations, by surrounding him with opportunities for taking advantages not strictly honourable, before he had formed any fixed principles at all. From the very first, Mr. Brunell had entered zealously into such conversations with myself as either gave openings for reviving his own delightful remembrances of classic authors, or brought up sometimes doubts for solution, sometimes perplexities and cases of intricate construction for illustration and disentanglement.

Hunger-bitten as the house and the household genius seemed, wearing the legend of *Famine* upon every mantelpiece and "coigne of vantage," and vehemently protesting, as it must have done through all its echoes, against the introduction of supernumerary mouths, nevertheless there was (and, I suppose, of necessity) a clerk, who bore the name of Pyment, or Pyemont, then first of all, then last of all, made known to me as a possible surname. Mr. Pyment had no *alias*—or not to my knowledge—except, indeed, in the vituperative vocabulary of Mr. Brunell; in which most variegated nomenclature he bore many scores of opprobrious names, having no reference whatever to any real habits of

the man, good or bad. At two rooms' distance, Mr. Brunell always assumed a minute and circumstantial knowledge of what Pyment was doing then, and what he was going to do next. All which Pyment gave himself little trouble to answer, unless it happened (as now and then it did) that he could do so with ludicrous effect. What made the necessity for Pyment was the continual call for "an appearance" to be put in at some of the subordinate courts in Westminster—courts of conscience, sheriff courts, &c. But it happens often that he who is most indispensable, and gets through most work at one hour, becomes a useless burden at another; as the hardest working reaper seems, in the eyes of an ignoramus, on a wet, wintry day, to be a luxurious idler. Of these ups and downs in Pyment's working life Mr. Brunell made a most cynical use; making out that Pyment not only did nothing, but also that he created much work for the afflicted Brunell. However, it happened occasionally that the truth vindicated itself, by making a call upon Pyment's physics—aggressive or defensive—that needed an instant attention. "Pyment, I say; this way, Pyment—you're wanted, Pyment." In fact, both were big, hulking men, and had need to be so; for sometimes, whether with good reason or none, clients at the end of a losing suit, or of a suit nominally gained, but unexpectedly laden with heavy expenses, became refractory, showed fight, and gave Pyment reason for saying that at least on this day he had earned his salary by serving an ejectment on a client whom on any other plan it might have been hard to settle with.

But I am anticipating. I go back, therefore, for a few explanatory words, to the day of my arrival in London. How beneficial to me would a little candour have been at that early period! If (which was the simple truth, known to all parties but myself) I had been told that nothing would be brought to a close in less than six months, even assuming the ultimate adoption of my proposals, I should from the first have dismissed all hopes of this nature, as being unsuited to the practicabilities of my situation. It will be seen further on that there was a real and sincere intention of advancing the money wanted. But it was then too late. And universally I believe myself entitled to say

that even honourable lawyers will not in a case of this nature move at a faster pace: they will all alike loiter upon varied allegations through six months; and for this reason,—that any shorter period, they fancy, will hardly seem to justify, in the eyes of their client, the sum which they find themselves entitled to charge for their trouble and their preliminary correspondence. How much better for both sides, and more honourable, as more frank and free from disguises, that the client should say, "Raise this sum" (of, suppose, £400) "in three weeks,—which can be done, if it can be done in three years; and here is a *bonus* of £100. Delay for two months, and I decline the whole transaction." Treated with that sort of openness, how much bodily suffering of an extreme order, and how much of the sickness from hope deferred, should I have escaped! Whereas, under the system (pursued with me as with all clients) of continually refreshing my hopes with new delusions, whiling me on with pretended preparation of deeds, and extorting from me, out of every little remittance I received from old family friends casually met in London, as much as possible for the purchase of imaginary stamps, the result was that I myself was brought to the brink of destruction through pure inanition; whilst, on the other hand, those concerned in these deceptions gained nothing that might not have been gained honourably and rightfully under a system of plain dealing.

As it was, subject to these eternal deceptions, I continued for seven or eight weeks to live most parsimoniously in lodgings. These lodgings, though barely decent in my eyes, ran away with at the least two-thirds of my remaining guineas. At length, whilst it was yet possible to reserve a solitary half-guinea towards the more urgent interest of finding daily food, I gave up my rooms, and, stating exactly the circumstances in which I stood, requested permission of Mr. Brunell to make use of his large house as a nightly asylum from the open air. Parliament had not then made it a crime, next door to a felony, for a man to sleep out-of-doors (as some twenty years later was done by our benign legislators); as yet *that* was no crime. By the law I came to know sin, and, looking back to the Cambrian hills from distant years, discovered to my surprise what a parliamentary

wretch I had been in elder days, when I slept amongst cows on the open hill-sides. Lawful as yet this was; but not, therefore, less full of misery. Naturally, then, I was delighted when Mr. Brunell not only most readily assented to my request, but begged of me to come that very night, and turn the house to account as fully as I possibly could. The cheerfulness of such a concession brought with it one drawback. I now regretted that I had not, at a much earlier period, applied for this liberty; since I might thus have saved a considerable fund of guineas, applicable, of course, to all urgent necessities, but at this particular moment to one of clamorous urgency—viz. the purchase of blankets. O ancient women, daughters of toil and suffering, amongst all the hardships and bitter inheritances of flesh that ye are called upon to face, not one—not even hunger—seems in my eyes comparable to that of nightly cold. To seek a refuge from cold in bed, and then, from the thin, gauzy texture of the miserable, worn-out blankets, "not to sleep a wink," as Wordsworth records of poor old women in Dorsetshire, where coals, from local causes, were at the very dearest—what a terrific enemy was *that* for poor old grandmothers to face in fight! How feelingly I learned at this time, as heretofore I had learned on the wild hill-sides in Wales, what an unspeakable blessing is that of warmth! A more killing curse there does not exist for man or woman than that bitter combat between the weariness that prompts sleep and the keen, searching cold that forces you from the first access of sleep to start up horror-stricken, and to seek warmth vainly in renewed exercise, though long since fainting under fatigue. However, even without blankets, it was a fine thing to have an asylum from the open air, and to be assured of this asylum as long as I was likely to want it.

Towards nightfall I went down to Greek Street, and found, on taking possession of my new quarters, that the house already contained one single inmate,—a poor, friendless child, apparently ten years old; but she seemed hunger-bitten; and sufferings of that sort often make children look older than they are. From this forlorn child I learned that she had slept and lived there alone for some time before I came; and great joy the poor creature expressed when she

found that I was in future to be her companion through the hours of darkness. The house could hardly be called large —that is, it was not large on each separate storey; but, having four storeys in all, it was large enough to impress vividly the sense of its echoing loneliness; and, from the want of furniture, the noise of the rats made a prodigious uproar on the staircase and hall; so that, amidst the real fleshly ills of cold and hunger, the forsaken child had found leisure to suffer still more from the self-created one of ghosts. Against these enemies I could promise her protection; human companionship was in itself protection; but of other and more needful aid I had, alas! little to offer. We lay upon the floor, with a bundle of law-papers for a pillow, but with no other covering than a large horseman's cloak; afterwards, however, we discovered in a garret an old sofa-cover, a small piece of rug, and some fragments of other articles, which added a little to our comfort. The poor child crept close to me for warmth, and for security against her ghostly enemies. When I was not more than usually ill, I took her into my arms, so that, in general, she was tolerably warm, and often slept when I could not; for, during the last two months of my sufferings, I slept much in the daytime, and was apt to fall into transient dozings at all hours. But my sleep distressed me more than my watching; for, besides the tumultuousness of my dreams (which were only not so awful as those which I shall have hereafter to describe as produced by opium), my sleep was never more than what is called *dog-sleep;* so that I could hear myself moaning; and very often I was awakened suddenly by my own voice. About this time, a hideous sensation began to haunt me as soon as I fell into a slumber, which has since returned upon me, at different periods of my life—viz. a sort of twitching (I knew not where, but apparently about the region of the stomach), which compelled me violently to throw out my feet for the sake of relieving it. This sensation coming on as soon as I began to sleep, and the effort to relieve it constantly awaking me, at length I slept only from exhaustion; and, through increasing weakness (as I said before), I was constantly falling asleep and constantly awaking. Too generally the very attainment of any deep repose seemed as if mechanically

linked to some fatal necessity of self-interruption. It was as though a cup were gradually filled by the sleepy overflow of some natural fountain, the fulness of the cup expressing symbolically the completeness of the rest: but then, in the next stage of the process, it seemed as though the rush and torrent-like babbling of the redundant waters, when running over from every part of the cup, interrupted the slumber which in their earlier stage of silent gathering they had so naturally produced. Such and so regular in its swell and its collapse—in its tardy growth and its violent dispersion—did this endless alternation of stealthy sleep and stormy awaking travel through stages as natural as the increments of twilight, or the kindlings of the dawn: no rest that was not a prologue to terror; no sweet tremulous pulses of restoration that did not suddenly explode through rolling clamours of fiery disruption.

Meantime, the master of the house sometimes came in upon us suddenly, and very early; sometimes not till ten o'clock; sometimes not at all. He was in constant fear of arrest. Improving on the plan of Cromwell, every night he slept in a different quarter of London; and I observed that he never failed to examine, through a private window, the appearance of those who knocked at the door, before he would allow it to be opened. He breakfasted alone; indeed, his tea equipage would hardly have admitted of his hazarding an invitation to a second person, any more than the quantity of esculent *material*, which, for the most part, was little more than a roll, or a few biscuits, purchased on his road from the place where he had slept. Or, if he *had* asked a party, as I once learnedly observed to him, the several members of it must have *stood* in the relation to each other (not *sat* in any relation whatever) of succession, and not of co-existence; in the relation of parts of time, and not of the parts of space. During his breakfast, I generally contrived a reason for lounging in; and, with an air of as much indifference as I could assume, took up such fragments as might chance to remain; sometimes, indeed, none at all remained. In doing this, I committed no robbery, except upon Mr. Brunell himself, who was thus obliged, now and then, to send out at noon for an extra biscuit; but he, through channels subse-

quently explained, was repaid a thousand-fold; and, as to the poor child, *she* was never admitted into his study (if I may give that name to his chief depository of parchments, law-writings, &c.); that room was to her the Bluebeard room of the house, being regularly locked on his departure to dinner, about six o'clock, which usually was his final departure for the day. Whether this child were an illegitimate daughter of Mr. Brunell, or only a servant, I could not ascertain; she did not herself know; but certainly she was treated altogether as a menial servant. No sooner did Mr. Brunell make his appearance than she went below-stairs, brushed his shoes, coat, &c.; and, except when she was summoned to run upon some errand, she never emerged from the dismal Tartarus of the kitchens to the upper air until my welcome knock towards nightfall called up her little trembling footsteps to the front-door. Of her life during the daytime, however, I knew little but what I gathered from her own account at night; for, as soon as the hours of business commenced, I saw that my absence would be acceptable; and, in general, therefore, I went off and sat in the parks or elsewhere until the approach of twilight.

But who, and what, meantime, was the master of the house himself? Reader, he was one of those anomalous practitioners in lower departments of the law who, on prudential reasons, or from necessity, deny themselves all indulgence in the luxury of too delicate a conscience. In many walks of life a conscience is a more expensive encumbrance than a wife or a carriage; and, as people talk of "laying down" their carriages, so I suppose my friend Mr. Brunell had "laid down" his conscience for a time; meaning, doubtless, to resume it as soon as he could afford it. He was an advertising attorney, who continually notified to the public, through the morning papers, that he undertook to raise loans for approved parties in what would generally be regarded as desperate cases—viz. where there was nothing better than *personal* security to offer. But, as he took good care to ascertain that there were ample funds in reversion to be counted on, or near connexions that would not suffer the family name to be dishonoured, and as he insured the borrower's life over a sufficient period, the risk was not great; and even of this

the whole rested upon the actual money-lender, who stood aloof in the background, and never revealed himself to clients in his proper person, transacting all affairs through his proxies learned in the law,—Mr. Brunell or others. The inner economy of such a man's daily life would present a monstrous picture. Even with my limited opportunities for observing what went on, I saw scenes of intrigue and complex chicanery at which I sometimes smile to this day, and at which I smiled then in spite of my misery. My situation, however, at that time, gave me little experience, in my own person, of any qualities in Mr. Brunell's character but such as did him honour; and of his whole strange composition I ought to forget everything, but that towards me he was obliging, and, to the extent of his power, generous.

That power was not, indeed, very extensive. However, in common with the rats, I sat rent free; and, as Dr. Johnson has recorded that he never but once in his life had as much wall-fruit as he wished, so let me be grateful that, on that single occasion, I had as large a choice of rooms, or even of apartments, in a London mansion—viz., as I am now at liberty to add, at the north-west corner of Greek Street, being the house on that side the street nearest to Soho Square—as I could possibly desire. Except the Bluebeard room, which the poor child believed to be permanently haunted, and which, besides, was locked, all others, from the attics to the cellars, were at our service. "The world was all before us," and we pitched our tent for the night in any spot we might fancy.

This house I have described as roomy and respectable. It stands in a conspicuous situation, and in a well-known part of London. Many of my readers will have passed it, I doubt not, within a few hours of reading this. For myself, I never fail to visit it when accident draws me to London. About ten o'clock this very night (August 15, 1821, being my birthday), I turned aside from my evening walk along Oxford Street, in order to take a glance at it. It is now in the occupation of some family, apparently respectable. The windows are no longer coated by a paste composed of ancient soot and superannuated rain; and the whole exterior no longer wears an aspect of gloom. By the lights in the front drawing-room, I

observed a domestic party, assembled, perhaps, at tea, and apparently cheerful and gay—marvellous contrast, in my eyes, to the darkness, cold, silence, and desolation, of that same house nineteen years ago, when its nightly occupants were one famishing scholar and a poor, neglected child. Her, by the bye, in after years, I vainly endeavoured to trace. Apart from her situation, she was not what would be called an interesting child. She was neither pretty, nor quick in understanding, nor remarkably pleasing in manners. But, thank God! even in those years I needed not the embellishments of elegant accessories to conciliate my affections. Plain human nature, in its humblest and most homely apparel, was enough for me; and I loved the child because she was my partner in wretchedness. If she is now living, she is probably a mother, with children of her own; but, as I have said, I could never trace her.

This I regret; but another person there was, at that time, whom I have since sought to trace with far deeper earnestness, and with far deeper sorrow at my failure. This person was a young woman, and one of that unhappy class who belong to the outcasts and pariahs of our female population. I feel no shame, nor have any reason to feel it, in avowing that I was then on familiar and friendly terms with many women in that unfortunate condition. Smile not, reader too carelessly facile! Frown not, reader too unseasonably austere! Little call was there here either for smiles or frowns. A penniless schoolboy could not be supposed to stand within the range of such temptations; besides that, according to the ancient Latin proverb, "*sine Cerere et Baccho*," &c. These unhappy women, to me, were simply sisters in calamity; and sisters amongst whom, in as large measure as amongst any other equal number of persons commanding more of the world's respect, were to be found humanity, disinterested generosity, courage that would not falter in defence of the helpless, and fidelity that would have scorned to take bribes for betraying. But the truth is that at no time of my life have I been a person to hold myself polluted by the touch or approach of any creature that wore a human shape. I cannot suppose, I will not believe, that any creatures wearing the form of man or woman are so absolutely rejected and

reprobate outcasts that merely to talk with them inflicts pollution. On the contrary, from my very earliest youth, it has been my pride to converse familiarly, *more Socratico*, with all human beings—man, woman, and child—that chance might fling in my way; for a philosopher should not see with the eyes of the poor limitary creature calling himself a man of the world, filled with narrow and self-regarding prejudices of birth and education, but should look upon himself as a catholic creature, and as standing in an equal relation to high and low, to educated and uneducated, to the guilty and the innocent. Being myself, at that time, of necessity a peripatetic, or a walker of the streets, I naturally fell in more frequently with those female peripatetics who are technically called street-walkers. Some of these women had occasionally taken my part against watchmen who wished to drive me off the steps of houses where I was sitting; others had protected me against more serious aggressions. But one amongst them —the one on whose account I have at all introduced this subject—yet no! let me not class thee, O noble-minded Ann ——, with that order of women; let me find, if it be possible, some gentler name to designate the condition of her to whose bounty and compassion—ministering to my necessities when all the world stood aloof from me—I owe it that I am at this time alive. For many weeks I had walked, at nights, with this poor friendless girl up and down Oxford Street, or had rested with her on steps and under the shelter of porticos.

She could not be so old as myself: she told me, indeed, that she had not completed her sixteenth year. By such questions as my interest about her prompted, I had gradually drawn forth her simple history. Hers was a case of ordinary occurrence (as I have since had reason to think), and one in which, if London beneficence had better adapted its arrangements to meet it, the power of the law might oftener be interposed to protect and to avenge. But the stream of London charity flows in a channel which, though deep and mighty, is yet noiseless and underground;—not obvious or readily accessible to poor, houseless wanderers; and it cannot be denied that the outside air and framework of society in London, as in all vast capitals, is unavoidably harsh, cruel, and repulsive. In any case, however, I saw that part of her

injuries might have been redressed; and I urged her often and earnestly to lay her complaint before a magistrate. Friendless as she was, I assured her that she would meet with immediate attention; and that English justice, which was no respecter of persons, would speedily and amply avenge her on the brutal ruffian who had plundered her little property. She promised me often that she would; but she delayed taking the steps I pointed out, from time to time; for she was timid and dejected to a degree which showed how deeply sorrow had taken hold of her young heart; and perhaps she thought justly that the most upright judge and the most righteous tribunals could do nothing to repair her heaviest wrongs. Something, however, would perhaps have been done; for it had been settled between us at length (but, unhappily, on the very last time but one that I was ever to see her) that in a day or two I, accompanied by her, should state her case to a magistrate. This little service it was destined, however, that I should never realise. Meantime, that which she rendered to me, and which was greater than I could ever have repaid her, was this:—One night, when we were pacing slowly along Oxford Street, and after a day when I had felt unusually ill and faint, I requested her to turn off with me into Soho Square. Thither we went; and we sat down on the steps of a house, which to this hour I never pass without a pang of grief, and an inner act of homage to the spirit of that unhappy girl, in memory of the noble act which she there performed. Suddenly, as we sat, I grew much worse. I had been leaning my head against her bosom, and all at once I sank from her arms, and fell backwards on the steps. From the sensations I then had, I felt an inner conviction of the liveliest kind that, without some powerful and reviving stimulus, I should either have died on the spot, or should, at least, have sunk to a point of exhaustion from which all re-ascent, under my friendless circumstances, would soon have become hopeless. Then it was, at this crisis of my fate, that my poor orphan companion, who had herself met with little but injuries in this world, stretched out a saving hand to me. Uttering a cry of terror, but without a moment's delay, she ran off into Oxford Street, and, in less time than could be imagined, returned to me with

a glass of port-wine and spices, that acted upon my empty stomach (which at that time would have rejected all solid food) with an instantaneous power of restoration ; and for this glass the generous girl, without a murmur, paid out of her own humble purse, at a time, be it remembered, when she had scarcely wherewithal to purchase the bare necessaries of life, and when she could have no reason to expect that I should ever be able to reimburse her. O youthful benefactress ! how often in succeeding years, standing in solitary places, and thinking of thee with grief of heart and perfect love—how often have I wished that, as in ancient times the curse of a father was believed to have a supernatural power, and to pursue its object with a fatal necessity of self-fulfilment, even so the benediction of a heart oppressed with gratitude might have a like prerogative ; might have power given it from above to chase, to haunt, to waylay, to pursue thee into the central darkness of a London brothel, or (if it were possible) even into the darkness of the grave, there to awaken thee with an authentic message of peace and forgiveness, and of final reconciliation !

Some feelings, though not deeper or more passionate, are more tender than others ; and often when I walk, at this time, in Oxford Street by dreamy lamp-light, and hear those airs played on a common street-organ which years ago solaced me and my dear youthful companion, I shed tears, and muse with myself at the mysterious dispensation which so suddenly and so critically separated us for ever. How it happened, the reader will understand from what remains of this introductory narration.[1]

Soon after the period of the last incident I have recorded, I met in Albemarle Street a gentleman of his late Majesty's household. This gentleman had received hospitalities, on different occasions, from my family ; and he challenged me upon the strength of my family likeness. I did not attempt any disguise, but answered his questions ingenuously ; and, on his pledging his word of honour that he would not betray me to my guardians, I gave him my real address in Greek

[1] This is the justification of the title now given to Part I. of the book. See *ante*, p. 223, footnote.—M.

Street. The next day I received from him a ten-pound bank-note. The letter enclosing it was delivered, with other letters of business, to the attorney; but, though his look and manner informed me that he suspected its contents, he gave it up to me honourably, and without demur.

This present, from the particular service to which much of it was applied, leads me naturally to speak again of the original purpose which had allured me up to London, and which I had been without intermission prosecuting through Mr. Brunell from the first day of my arrival in London.

In so mighty a world as London, it will surprise my readers that I should not have found some means of staving off the last extremities of penury; and it will strike them that two resources, at least, must have been open to me: viz. either to seek assistance from the friends of my family, or to turn my youthful accomplishments, such as they were, into some channel of pecuniary emolument. As to the first course, I may observe, generally, that what I dreaded beyond all other evils was the chance of being reclaimed by my guardians; not doubting that whatever power the law gave them would have been enforced against me to the utmost; that is, to the extremity of forcibly restoring me to the school which I had quitted,—a restoration which, as it would, in my eyes, have been a dishonour even if submitted to voluntarily, could not fail, when extorted from me in contempt and defiance of my own known wishes and earnest resistance, to have proved a humiliation worse to me than death, and which would, indeed, have terminated in death. I was, therefore, shy enough of applying for assistance even in those quarters where I was sure of receiving it, if at any risk of furnishing my guardians with a clue for tracing me. My father's friends, no doubt, had been many, and were scattered all over the kingdom; but, as to London in particular, though a large section of these friends would certainly be found there, yet (as full ten years had passed since his death) I knew very few of them even by name; and, never having seen London before—except once, in my fifteenth year, for a few hours—I knew not the address of even those few. To this mode of gaining help, therefore, in part the difficulty, but much more the danger which I have men-

tioned, habitually indisposed me. In regard to the other mode—that of turning any talents or knowledge that I might possess to a lucrative use—I now feel half inclined to join my reader in wondering that I should have overlooked it. As a corrector of Greek proofs (if in no other way), I might surely have gained enough for my slender wants. Such an office as this I could have discharged with an exemplary and punctual accuracy that would soon have gained me the confidence of my employers. And there was this great preliminary advantage in giving such a direction to my efforts, that the intellectual dignity and elegance associated with all ministerial services about the press would have saved my pride and self-respect from mortification. In an extreme case, such as mine had now become, I should not have absolutely disdained the humble station of "devil." A subaltern situation in a service inherently honourable is better than a much higher situation in a service pointing to ultimate objects that are mean or ignoble. I am, indeed, not sure that I could adequately have discharged the functions of this office. To the perfection of the diabolic character I fear that patience is one of the indispensable graces; more, perhaps, than I should be found on trial to possess for dancing attendance upon crotchety authors, superstitiously fastidious in matters of punctuation. But why talk of my qualifications? Qualified or not, where could I obtain such an office? For it must not be forgotten that even a diabolic appointment requires interest. Towards *that* I must first of all have an introduction to some respectable publisher; and this I had no means of obtaining. To say the truth, however, it had never once occurred to me to think of literary labours as a source of profit. No mode sufficiently speedy of obtaining money had ever suggested itself but that of borrowing it on the strength of my future claims and expectations. This mode I sought by every avenue to compass; and amongst other persons I applied to a Jew named D——.[1]

[1] At this period (autumn of 1856), when thirty-five years have elapsed since the first publication of these memoirs, reasons of delicacy can no longer claim respect for concealing the Jew's name, or at least the name which he adopted in his dealings with the Gentiles. I say, therefore, without scruple, that the name was Dell: and some years later it was one of the names that came before the House of Commons

To this Jew, and to other advertising money-lenders, I had introduced myself, with an account of my expectations; which account they had little difficulty in ascertaining to be correct. The person there mentioned as the second son of —— was found to have all the claims (or more than all) that I had stated: but one question still remained, which the faces of the Jews pretty significantly suggested,—was I that person? This doubt had never occurred to me as a possible one; I had rather feared, whenever my Jewish friends scrutinised me keenly, that I might be too well known to be that person, and that some scheme might be passing in their minds

in connexion with something or other (I have long since forgotten *what*) growing out of the parliamentary movement against the Duke of York, in reference to Mrs. Clark, &c. Like all the other Jews with whom I have had negotiations, he was frank and honourable in his mode of conducting business. What he promised he performed; and, if his terms were high, as naturally they could not *but* be, to cover his risks, he avowed them from the first.——To this same Mr. Dell, by the way, some eighteen months afterwards, I applied again on the same business; and, dating at that time from a respectable college, I was fortunate enough to win his serious attention to my proposals. My necessities had not arisen from any extravagance or youthful levities (these my habits forbade), but simply from the vindictive malice of my guardian, who, when he found himself no longer able to prevent me from going to the university, had, as a parting token of his regard, refused to sign an order for granting me a shilling beyond the allowance made to me at school—viz. £100 per annum. Upon this sum it was, in my time (*i.e.* in the first decennium of this century), barely possible to have lived at college; and not possible to a man who, though above the affectation of ostentatious disregard for money, and without any expensive tastes, confided, nevertheless, rather too much in servants, and did not delight in the petty details of minute economy. I soon, therefore, became embarrassed: in a movement of impatience, instead of candidly avowing my condition to my mother, or to some one of the guardians, more than one of whom would have advanced me the £250 wanted (not in his legal character of guardian, but as a private friend), I was so foolish as to engage in a voluminous negotiation with the Jew, and was put in possession of the sum I asked for, on the "regular" terms of paying seventeen and a-half per cent by way of annuity on all the money furnished; Israel, on his part, graciously resuming no more than about ninety guineas of the said money, on account of an attorney's bill (for what services, to whom rendered, and when—whether at the siege of Jerusalem, or at the building of the Second Temple—I have not yet discovered). How many perches this bill measured I really forget; but I still keep it in a cabinet of natural curiosities.

for entrapping me and selling me to my guardians. It was strange to me to find my own self, *materialiter* considered (so I expressed it, for I doated on logical accuracy of distinctions), suspected of counterfeiting my own self, *formaliter* considered. However, to satisfy their scruples, I took the only course in my power. Whilst I was in Wales, I had received various letters from young friends; these I produced, for I carried them constantly in my pocket. Most of these letters were from the Earl of Altamont, who was at that time, and had been for some years back, amongst my confidential friends.[1] These were dated from Eton. I had also some from the Marquis of Sligo, his father[2]; who, though absorbed in agricultural pursuits, yet having been an Etonian himself, and as good a scholar as a nobleman needs to be, still retained an affection for classical studies and for youthful scholars. He had, accordingly, from the time that I was fifteen, corresponded with me—sometimes upon the great improvements which he had made, or was meditating, in the counties of Mayo and Sligo, since I had been there; sometimes upon the merits of a Latin poet; at other times, suggesting subjects on which he fancied that I could write verses myself, or breathe poetic inspiration into the mind of my once familiar companion, his son.

On reading the letters, one of my Jewish friends agreed to furnish two or three hundred pounds on my personal security, provided I could persuade the young earl—who was, by the way, not older than myself—to guarantee the payment on our joint coming of age; the Jew's final object being, as I now suppose, not the trifling profit he could expect to make by me, but the prospect of establishing a connexion with my noble friend, whose great expectations were well known to him. In pursuance of this proposal on the part of the Jew, about eight or nine days after I had received the £10, I prepared to visit Eton. Nearly three guineas of the money I had given to my money-lending friend in the background; or, more accurately, I had given that sum to Mr. Brunell, *alias* Brown, as representing Mr. Dell, the Jew; and a smaller sum I had given directly to himself, on his own separate account.

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. pp. 161, 162, and p. 398, n.—M.
[2] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 162, n, and p. 398, n.—M.

What he alleged in excuse for thus draining my purse at so critical a moment was that stamps must be bought, in order that the writings might be prepared whilst I was away from London. I thought in my heart that he was lying, but I did not wish to give him any excuse for charging his own delays upon me. About fifteen shillings I had employed in re-establishing (though in a very humble way) my dress. Of the remainder, I gave one-quarter (something more than a guinea) to Ann, meaning, on my return, to have divided with her whatever might remain.

These arrangements made, soon after six o'clock, on a dark winter evening, I set off, accompanied by Ann, towards Piccadilly; for it was my intention to go down as far as the turn to Salt Hill and Slough on the Bath or Bristol mail. Our course lay though a part of the town which has now totally disappeared, so that I can no longer retrace its ancient boundaries—having been replaced by Regent Street and its adjacencies. *Swallow Street* is all that I remember of the names superseded by this large revolutionary usurpation. Having time enough before us, however, we bore away to the left, until we came into Golden Square. There, near the corner of Sherrard Street, we sat down, not wishing to part in the tumult and blaze of Piccadilly. I had told Ann of my plans some time before, and now I assured her again that she should share in my good fortune, if I met with any, and that I would never forsake her, as soon as I had power to protect her. This I fully intended, as much from inclination as from a sense of duty; for, setting aside gratitude (which in any case must have made me her debtor for life), I loved her as affectionately as if she had been my sister; and at this moment with sevenfold tenderness, from pity at witnessing her extreme dejection. I had apparently most reason for dejection, because I was leaving the saviour of my life; yet I, considering the shock my health had received, was cheerful and full of hope. She, on the contrary, who was parting with one who had had little means of serving her, except by kindness and brotherly treatment, was overcome by sorrow, so that, when I kissed her at our final farewell, she put her arms about my neck, and wept, without speaking a word. I hoped to return in a week, at furthest, and I agreed with

her that, on the fifth night from that, and every night afterwards, she should wait for me, at six o'clock, near the bottom of Great Titchfield Street; which had formerly been our customary haven of rendezvous, to prevent our missing each other in the great Mediterranean of Oxford Street. This, and other measures of precaution, I took; one, only, I forgot. She had either never told me, or (as a matter of no great interest) I had forgotten, her surname. It is a general practice, indeed, with girls of humble rank in her unhappy condition, not (as novel-reading women of higher pretensions) to style themselves *Miss Douglas*, *Miss Montague*, &c., but simply by their Christian names, *Mary*, *Jane*, *Frances*, &c. Her surname, as the surest means of tracing her, I ought now to have inquired; but the truth is, having no reason to think that our meeting again could, in consequence of a short interruption, be more difficult or uncertain than it had been for so many weeks, I scarcely for a moment adverted to it as necessary, or placed it amongst my memoranda against this parting interview; and, my final anxieties being spent in comforting her with hopes, and in pressing upon her the necessity of getting some medicine for a violent cough with which she was troubled, I wholly forgot this precaution until it was too late to recall her.

When I reached the Gloucester Coffee-house in Piccadilly, at which, in those days, all the western mails stopped for a few minutes in going out of London, it was already a quarter-of-an-hour past eight o'clock; the Bristol Mail was on the point of going off, and I mounted on the outside. The fine fluent motion[1] of this mail soon laid me asleep. It is somewhat remarkable that the first easy or refreshing sleep which I had enjoyed for some months was on the outside of a mail-coach—a bed which, at this day, I find rather an uneasy one. Connected with this sleep was a little incident which served, as hundreds of others did at that time, to con-

[1] The Bristol Mail was at that time the best appointed in the kingdom—owing that advantage, first of all, to an unusually good road—and this advantage it shared with the Bath Mail (their route being exactly the same for a hundred and five miles); but, secondly, it had the separate advantage of an *extra* sum for expenses subscribed by the Bristol merchants.

vince me how easily a man who has never been in any great distress may pass through life without knowing in his own person, and experimentally testing, the possible goodness of the human heart, or, as unwillingly I add, its possible churlishness. So thick a curtain of *manners* is drawn over the features and expression of men's natures that, to the ordinary observer, the two extremities, and the infinite field of varieties which lie between them, are all confounded under one neutral disguise. The case was this:—For the first four or five miles out of London, I annoyed my fellow-passenger on the roof by occasionally falling against him when the coach gave a lurch; and, indeed, if the road had been less smooth and level than it was, I should have fallen off from weakness. Of this annoyance he complained heavily; as, perhaps, in the same circumstances, most people would. He expressed his complaint, however, more morosely than the occasion seemed to warrant; and, if I had parted with him at that moment, I should have thought of him as a surly and almost brutal fellow. Still I was conscious that I had given him some cause for complaint; and therefore I apologised, assuring him that I would do what I could to avoid falling asleep for the future; and, at the same time, in as few words as possible, I explained to him that I was ill, and in a weak state from long suffering, and that I could not afford to take an inside place. The man's manner changed upon hearing this explanation in an instant: and, when I next woke for a minute, from the noise and lights of Hounslow (for, in spite of my efforts, I had again fallen asleep within two minutes), I found that he had put his arm round me to protect me from falling off; and for the rest of my journey he behaved to me with the gentleness of a woman. And this was the more kind, as he could not have known that I was not going the whole way to Bath or Bristol. Unfortunately, indeed, I *did* go further than I intended; for so genial and refreshing was my sleep, being in the open air, that, upon the sudden pulling up of the mail (possibly at a post-office), I found that we had reached some place six or seven miles to the west of Salt Hill. Here I alighted; and, during the half-minute that the mail stopped, I was entreated by my friendly companion (who, from the transient

glimpse I had of him under the glaring lights of Piccadilly, might be a respectable upper servant) to go to bed without delay. This, under the feeling that some consideration was due to one who had done me so seasonable a service, I promised, though with no intention of doing so; and, in fact, I immediately moved forward on foot.

It must then have been nearly eleven; but so slowly did I creep along that I heard a clock in a cottage strike four as I was on the point of turning down the road from Slough to Eton. The air and the sleep had both refreshed me; but I was weary, nevertheless. I remember a thought (obvious enough, and pointedly expressed by a Roman poet) which gave me some consolation, at that moment, under my poverty. There had been, some weeks before, a murder committed on Hounslow Heath, which at that time was really a heath, entirely unenclosed, and exhibiting a sea-like expanse in all directions, except one. I cannot be mistaken when I say that the name of the murdered person was *Steele*, and that he was the owner of a lavender plantation in that neighbourhood.[1] Every step of my regress (for I now walked with my face towards London) was bringing me nearer to the heath; and it naturally occurred to me that I and the accursed murderer, if he were that night abroad, might, at every instant, be unconsciously approaching each other through the darkness; in which case, said I, supposing myself—instead of being little better than an outcast,

"Lord of my learning, and no land beside"—

[1] Two men, Holloway and Haggerty, were long afterwards convicted, upon very questionable evidence, as the perpetrators of this murder. The main testimony against them was that of a Newgate turnkey, who had imperfectly overheard a conversation between the two men. The current impression was that of great dissatisfaction with the evidence; and this impression was strengthened by the pamphlet of an acute lawyer, exposing the unsoundness and incoherency of the statements relied upon by the court. They were executed, however, in the teeth of all opposition. And, as it happened that an enormous wreck of life occurred at the execution (not fewer, I believe, than sixty persons having been trampled under foot by the unusual pressure of some brewers' draymen forcing their way with linked arms to the space below the drop), this tragedy was regarded for many years by a section of the London mob as a providential judgment upon the passive metropolis.

like my friend Lord Altamont, heir, by general repute, to £30,000 per annum, what a panic should I be under at this moment about my throat! Indeed, it was not likely that Lord Altamont should ever be in my situation; but, nevertheless, the spirit of the remark remains true, that vast power and possessions make a man shamefully afraid of dying; and I am convinced that many of the most intrepid adventurers who, being poor, enjoy the full use of their natural energies, would, if at the very instant of going into action news were brought to them that they had unexpectedly succeeded to an estate in England of £50,000 a-year, feel their dislike to bullets furiously sharpened,[1] and their efforts at self-possession proportionably difficult. So true it is, in the language of a wise man, whose own experience had made him acquainted equally with good and evil fortune, that riches are better fitted

> "To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
> Than tempt her to do aught may merit praise."
> *Paradise Regained.*[2]

I dally with my subject, because, to myself, the remembrance of these times is profoundly interesting. But my reader shall not have any further cause to complain; for now I hasten to its close. In the road between Slough and Eton I fell asleep; and, just as the morning began to dawn, I was awakened by the voice of a man standing over me, and apparently studying my *physics*, whilst to me—upon so sudden an introduction to him in so suspicious a situation—his *morals* naturally suggested a more interesting subject of inquiry. I know not what he was. He was an ill-looking fellow, but not, therefore, of necessity, an ill-meaning fellow; or, if he were, I suppose he thought that no person sleeping out-of-doors in winter could be worth robbing. In which conclusion, however, as it regarded myself, I have the honour

[1] It will be objected that many men, of the highest rank and wealth, have, notwithstanding, in our own day, as well as throughout our history, been amongst the foremost in courting danger on the field of battle. True; but this is not the case supposed. Long familiarity with power and with wealth has, to them, deadened their effect and attractions.

[2] Book II. lines 455, 456; but the word is *prompt*, not *tempt*.—M.

to assure him, supposing him ever to find himself amongst my readers, that he was entirely mistaken. I was not sorry at his disturbance, as it roused me to pass through Eton before people were generally astir. The night had been heavy and misty; but towards the morning it had changed to a slight frost, and the trees were now covered with rime.

I slipped through Eton unobserved; washed myself, and as far as possible adjusted my dress, at a little public-house in Windsor; and, about eight o'clock, went down towards the precincts of the college, near which were congregated the houses of the "Dames." On my road I met some junior boys, of whom I made inquiries. An Etonian is always a gentleman; and, in spite of my shabby habiliments, they answered me civilly. My friend Lord Altamont was gone to Jesus College, Cambridge. "Ibi omnis effusus labor!" I had, however, other friends at Eton; but it is not to all who wear that name in prosperity that a man is willing to present himself in distress. On recollecting myself, however, I asked for the Earl of Desart,[1] to whom (though my acquaintance with him was not so intimate as with some others) I should not have shrunk from presenting myself under any circumstances. He was still at Eton, though, I believe, on the wing for Cambridge. I called, was received kindly, and asked to breakfast.

Lord Desart placed before me a magnificent breakfast. It was really such; but in my eyes it seemed trebly magnificent from being the first regular meal, the first "good man's table," that I had sat down to for months. Strange to say, I could scarcely eat anything. On the day when I first received my ten-pound bank-note, I had gone to a baker's shop and bought a couple of rolls; this very shop I had some weeks before surveyed with an eagerness of desire which it was humiliating to recollect. I remembered the story (which, however, I now believed to be a falsehood) about

[1] I had known Lord Desart, the eldest son of a very large family, some years earlier, when bearing the title of Lord Castlecuffe. Cuffe was the family name; and I believe that they traced their descent from a person of some historic interest—viz. that Cuffe who was secretary to the unhappy Earl of Essex during his treasonable *émeute* against the government of Queen Elizabeth.

Otway, and feared that there might be danger in eating too rapidly. But there was no cause for alarm; my appetite was utterly gone, and I nauseated food of every kind. This effect, from eating what approached to a meal, I continued to feel for weeks. On the present occasion, at Lord Desart's table, I found myself not at all better than usual; and, in the midst of luxuries, appetite I had none. I had, however, unfortunately, at all times a craving for wine: I explained my situation, therefore, to Lord Desart, and gave him a short account of my late sufferings; with which he expressed deep sympathy, and called for wine. This gave me instantaneous relief and immoderate pleasure; and on all occasions, when I had an opportunity, I never failed to drink wine. Obvious it is, however, that this indulgence in wine would continue to strengthen my malady, for the tone of my stomach was apparently quite sunk; but, by a better regimen, it might sooner, and, perhaps, effectually, have been restored.

I hope that it was not from this love of wine that I lingered in the neighbourhood of my Eton friends; I persuaded myself *then* that it was from reluctance to ask Lord Desart, on whom I was conscious of having no sufficient claims, the particular service in quest of which I had come to Eton. I was, however, unwilling to lose my journey, and —I asked it. Lord Desart, whose good-nature was unbounded, and which, in regard to myself, had been measured rather by his compassion, perhaps, for my condition, and his knowledge of my intimacy with several of his relatives, than by an over-rigorous inquiry into the extent of my own direct claims, faltered, nevertheless, at this request. He acknowledged that he did not like to have any dealings with money-lenders, and feared lest such a transaction might come to the ears of his connexions. Moreover, he doubted whether *his* signature, whose expectations were so much more bounded than those of his cousin, would avail with my unchristian friends. Still he did not wish, apparently, to mortify me by a refusal peremptory and absolute; for, after a little consideration, he promised, under certain conditions, which he pointed out, to give his security. Lord Desart was at this time not above eighteen years of age; but I have often doubted, on recollecting since the good sense and prudence

which on this occasion he mingled with so much urbanity of manner (which in him wore the grace of youthful sincerity), whether any statesman, the oldest and the most accomplished in diplomacy, could have acquitted himself better under the same circumstances.

Re-comforted by this promise, which was not quite equal to the best, but far above the worst that I had anticipated, I returned in a Windsor coach to London three days after I had quitted it. And now I come to the end of my story. The Jews did not approve of Lord Desart's conditions, or so they said. Whether they would in the end have acceded to them, and were only seeking time for making further inquiries, I know not; but many delays were made—time passed on—the small fragment of my bank-note had just melted away, and before any conclusion could have been put to the business I must have relapsed into my former state of wretchedness. Suddenly, at this crisis, an opening was made, almost by accident, for reconciliation with my guardians. I quitted London in haste, and returned to the Priory [1]; after some time, I proceeded to Oxford; and it was not until many months had passed away that I had it in my power again to revisit the ground which had become so interesting to me, and to this day remains so, as the chief scene of my youthful sufferings.

Meantime, what had become of Ann? Where was she? Whither had she gone? According to our agreement, I sought her daily, and waited for her every night, so long as I staid in London, at the corner of Titchfield Street; and during the last days of my stay in London I put into activity every means of tracing her that my knowledge of London suggested, and the limited extent of my power made possible. The street where she had lodged I knew, but not the house; and I remembered, at last, some account which she had given of ill-treatment from her landlord, which made it probable that she had quitted those lodgings before we parted. She had few acquaintance; most people, besides, thought that the earnestness of my inquiries arose from motives which moved their laughter or their slight regard; and others, thinking that I was in chase of a girl who had robbed me of some

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 400.—M.

trifles, were naturally and excusably indisposed to give me any clue to her, if indeed they had any to give. Finally, as my despairing resource, on the day I left London I put into the hands of the only person who (I was sure) must know Ann by sight, from having been in company with us once or twice, an address to the Priory. All was in vain. To this hour I have never heard a syllable about her. This, amongst such troubles as most men meet with in this life, has been my heaviest affliction. If she lived, doubtless we must have been sometimes in search of each other, at the very same moment, through the mighty labyrinths of London; perhaps even within a few feet of each other—a barrier no wider, in a London street, often amounting in the end to a separation for eternity! During some years I hoped that she *did* live; and I suppose that, in the literal and unrhetorical use of the word *myriad*, I must, on my different visits to London, have looked into many myriads of female faces, in the hope of meeting Ann. I should know her again amongst a thousand, and if seen but for a moment. Handsome she was not; but she had a sweet expression of countenance, and a peculiarly graceful carriage of the head. I sought her, I have said, in hope. So it was for years; but now I should fear to see her; and her cough, which grieved me when I parted with her, is now my consolation. Now I wish to see her no longer, but think of her, more gladly, as one long since laid in the grave—in the grave, I would hope, of a Magdalen; taken away before injuries and cruelty had blotted out and transfigured her ingenuous nature, or the brutalities of ruffians had completed the ruin they had begun.

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So then, Oxford Street, stony-hearted stepmother, thou that listenest to the sighs of orphans, and drinkest the tears of children, at length I was dismissed from thee! The time was come that I no more should pace in anguish thy never-ending terraces, no more should wake and dream in captivity to the pangs of hunger. Successors too many to myself and Ann have, doubtless, since then trodden in our footsteps, inheritors of our calamities. Other orphans than Ann have

sighed; tears have been shed by other children; and thou, Oxford Street, hast since those days echoed to the groans of innumerable hearts. For myself, however, the storm which I had outlived seemed to have been the pledge of a long fair weather; the premature sufferings which I had paid down to have been accepted as a ransom for many years to come, as a price of long immunity from sorrow; and, if again I walked in London, a solitary and contemplative man (as oftentimes I did), I walked for the most part in serenity and peace of mind. And, although it is true that the calamities of my novitiate in London had struck root so deeply in my bodily constitution that afterwards they shot up and flourished afresh, and grew into a noxious umbrage that has overshadowed and darkened my latter years, yet these second assaults of suffering were met with a fortitude more confirmed, with the resources of a maturer intellect, and with alleviations, how deep! from sympathising affection.

Thus, however, with whatsoever alleviations, years far asunder were bound together by subtle links of suffering derived from a common root. And herein I notice the shortsightedness of human desires—that oftentimes, on moonlight nights, during my first mournful abode in London, my consolation was (if such it could be thought) to gaze from Oxford Street up every avenue in succession which pierces northwards through the heart of Marylebone to the fields and the woods; for *that*, said I, travelling with my eyes up the long vistas which lay part in light and part in shade—"*that* is the road to the north, and, therefore, to Grasmere" (upon which, though as yet unknown to me, I had a presentiment that I should fix my choice for a residence); "and, if I had the wings of a dove, *that* way I would fly for rest." Thus I said, and thus I wished in my blindness; yet, even in that very northern region it was, in that very valley to which my erroneous wishes pointed, that this second birth of my sufferings began, and that they again threatened to besiege the citadel of life and hope. There it was that for years I was persecuted by visions as ugly, and by phantoms as ghastly, as ever haunted the couch of Orestes; and in this unhappier than he—that sleep, which comes to all as a respite and a restoration, and to him especially as a blessed balm for his

wounded heart and his haunted brain, visited me as my bitterest scourge. Thus blind was I in my desires. And yet, if a veil interposes between the dim-sightedness of man and his future calamities, the same veil hides from him their alleviations; and a grief which had not been feared is met by consolations which had not been hoped. I, therefore, who participated, as it were, in the troubles of Orestes (excepting only in his agitated conscience), participated no less in all his supports; my Eumenides, like his, were at my bed-feet, and stared in upon me through the curtains; but, watching by my pillow, or defrauding herself of sleep to bear me company through the heavy watches of the night, sat my Electra; for thou, beloved M——, dear companion of my later years,[1] thou wast my Electra, and neither in nobility of mind nor in long-suffering affection wouldst permit that a Grecian sister should excel an English wife. For thou thoughtest not much to stoop to humble offices of kindness, and to servile ministrations of tenderest affection; to wipe away for years the unwholesome dews upon the forehead, or to refresh the lips when parched and baked with fever; nor even when thy own peaceful slumbers had by long sympathy become infected with the spectacle of my dread contest with phantoms and shadowy enemies that oftentimes bade me "sleep no more" —not even then didst thou utter a complaint or any murmur, nor withdraw thy angelic smiles, nor shrink from thy service of love, more than Electra did of old. For she, too, though she was a Grecian woman, and the daughter of the king of men,[2] yet wept sometimes, and hid her face[3] in her robe.

[1] His wife, Margaret Simpson, the dalesman's daughter of Westmoreland, whom he had married in 1816, and of whom and her assiduities to him through the worst years of his opium-agonies at Grasmere there is to be further mention in these Confessions.—M.

[2] Agamemnon—*ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν*.

[3] *Ὄμμα θεῖς' εἰς πέπλον*. The scholar will know that throughout this passage I refer to the early scenes of the *Orestes*,—one of the most beautiful exhibitions of the domestic affections which even the dramas of Euripides can furnish. To the unlearned reader it may be necessary to say that the situation at the opening of the drama is that of a brother attended only by his sister during the demoniacal possession of a suffering conscience (or, in the mythology of the play, haunted by the Furies), under circumstances of immediate danger from enemies, and of desertion or cold regard from nominal friends.

But these troubles are past, and thou wilt read these records of a period so dolorous to us both as the legend of some hideous dream that can return no more. Meantime I am again in London, and again I pace the terraces of Oxford Street by night[1]; and oftentimes—when I am oppressed by anxieties that demand all my philosophy and the comfort of thy presence to support, and yet remember that I am separated from thee by three hundred miles and the length of three dreary months—I look up the streets that run northward from Oxford Street, upon moonlight nights, and recollect my youthful ejaculation of anguish; but then, remembering that thou art sitting alone in that same valley, and mistress of that very house to which my heart turned in its blindness nineteen years ago, I think that, though blind indeed, and scattered to the winds of late, the promptings of my heart may yet have had reference to a remoter time, and may be justified if read in another meaning; and, if I could allow myself to descend again to the impotent wishes of childhood, I should again say to myself, as I look to the north, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove!" and with how just a confidence in thy good and gracious nature might I add the other half of my early ejaculation—"and *that* way I would fly for comfort!"

[1] At this point the reader must imagine himself again in London with De Quincey, in that month of August 1821 when, having left his wife and children at Grasmere three months before, he was penning the original of these "Confessions" for the *London Magazine*, and otherwise endeavouring, for their sakes and his own, to establish some literary connexion that might repair his then shattered means. He is again pacing, he tells us, those London streets which had been the scene of his miserable vagrancy eighteen years before,—*i.e.* from November 1802 to March 1803,—recalling all the incidents of that vagrancy, but thinking also of all that had occurred since, and yearning for his distant home in the north.—M.

PART II

THE PLEASURES OF OPIUM

It is very long since I first took opium ; *so* long that, if it had been a trifling incident in my life, I might have forgotten its date : but cardinal events are not to be forgotten ; and, from circumstances connected with it, I remember that this inauguration into the use of opium must be referred to the spring or to the autumn of 1804 ; during which seasons I was in London, having come thither for the first time since my entrance at Oxford. And this event arose in the following way :—From an early age I had been accustomed to wash my head in cold water at least once a-day. Being suddenly seized with toothache, I attributed it to some relaxation caused by a casual intermission of that practice, jumped out of bed, plunged my head into a basin of cold water, and with hair thus wetted went to sleep. The next morning, as I need hardly say, I awoke with excruciating rheumatic pains of the head and face, from which I had hardly any respite for about twenty days. On the twenty-first day I think it was, and on a Sunday, that I went out into the streets ; rather to run away, if possible, from my torments, than with any distinct purpose of relief. By accident, I met a college acquaintance, who recommended opium. Opium ! dread agent of unimaginable pleasure and pain ! I had heard of it as I had heard of manna or of ambrosia, but no further. How unmeaning a sound was opium at that time ! what solemn chords does it now strike upon my heart ! what heart-quaking vibrations of sad and happy remembrances ! Revert-

ing for a moment to these, I feel a mystic importance attached to the minutest circumstances connected with the place, and the time, and the man (if man he was), that first laid open to me the paradise of opium-eaters. It was a Sunday afternoon, wet and cheerless; and a duller spectacle this earth of ours has not to show than a rainy Sunday in London. My road homewards lay through Oxford Street; and near "the *stately* Pantheon" (as Mr. Wordsworth has obligingly called it[1]) I saw a druggist's shop. The druggist (unconscious minister of celestial pleasures!), as if in sympathy with the rainy Sunday, looked dull and stupid, just as any mortal druggist might be expected to look on a rainy London Sunday; and, when I asked for the tincture of opium, he gave it to me as any other man might do; and, furthermore, out of my shilling returned to me what seemed to be real copper halfpence, taken out of a real wooden drawer. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding all such indications of humanity, he has ever since figured in my mind as a beatific vision of an immortal druggist, sent down to earth on a special mission to myself. And it confirms me in this way of considering him that, when I next came up to London, I sought him near the stately Pantheon, and found him not; and thus to me, who knew not his name (if, indeed, he had one), he seemed rather to have vanished from Oxford Street than to have flitted into any other locality, or (which some abominable man suggested) to have absconded from the rent. The reader may choose to think of him as, possibly, no more than a sublunary druggist; it may be so, but my faith is better. I believe him to have evanesced.[2] So unwillingly would I

[1] "*Stately*":—It is but fair to say that Wordsworth meant to speak of the *interior*, which could very little be inferred from the mean, undistinguished outside, as seen presenting itself endways in Oxford Street. [The reference is to these lines in the opening stanza of Wordsworth's poem *Power of Music*, describing a street-fiddler in London—

> "Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same,
> In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name."—M.]

[2] "*Evanesced*":—This way of going off from the stage of life appears to have been well known in the seventeenth century, but at that time to have been considered a peculiar privilege of royalty, and by no means open to the use of druggists. For, about the year 1686,

connect any mortal remembrances with that hour, and place, and creature that first brought me acquainted with the celestial drug.

Arrived at my lodgings, it may be supposed that I lost not a moment in taking the quantity prescribed. I was necessarily ignorant of the whole art and mystery of opium-taking; and what I took I took under every disadvantage. But I took it; and in an hour, O heavens! what a revulsion! what a resurrection, from its lowest depths, of the inner spirit! what an apocalypse of the world within me! That my pains had vanished was now a trifle in my eyes; this negative effect was swallowed up in the immensity of those positive effects which had opened before me, in the abyss of divine enjoyment thus suddenly revealed. Here was a panacea, a *φάρμακον νηπενθές* for all human woes; here was the secret of happiness, about which philosophers had disputed for so many ages, at once discovered; happiness might now be bought for a penny, and carried in the waistcoat-pocket; portable ecstasies might be had corked up in a pint-bottle; and peace of mind could be sent down by the mail.

And, first, one word with respect to its bodily effects; for upon all that has been hitherto written on the subject of opium, whether by travellers in Turkey (who may plead their privilege of lying as an old immemorial right), or by professors of medicine writing *ex cathedra*, I have but one emphatic criticism to pronounce—Nonsense! I remember once, in passing a book-stall, to have caught these words from a page of some satiric author—"By this time I became convinced that the London newspapers spoke truth at least twice a-week—viz. on Tuesday and Saturday [1]—and might safely be depended upon for—the list of bankrupts." In like manner, I do by no means deny that some truths have

a poet of rather ominous name (and who, apparently, did justice to his name)—viz. Mr. FLATMAN—in speaking of the death of Charles II, expresses his surprise that any prince should commit so vulgar an act as dying; because, says he,

"Kings should disdain to die, and only *disappear*."

[1] "*Tuesday and Saturday*": viz. the two days on which the "Gazette" is (or used to be) published.

been delivered to the world in regard to opium: thus, it has been repeatedly affirmed by the learned that opium is a tawny brown in colour—and this, take notice, I grant; secondly, that it is rather dear—which also I grant, for in my time East India opium has been three guineas a-pound, and Turkey eight; and, thirdly, that, if you eat a good deal of it, most probably you must do what is disagreeable to any man of regular habits—viz. die.[1] These weighty propositions are, all and singular, true; I cannot gainsay them; and truth ever was, and will be, commendable. But in these three theorems I believe we have exhausted the stock of knowledge as yet accumulated by man on the subject of opium. And therefore, worthy doctors, as there seems to be room for further discoveries, stand aside, and allow me to come forward and lecture on this matter.

First, then, it is not so much affirmed as taken for granted by all who ever mention opium, formally or incidentally, that it does or can produce intoxication. Now, reader, assure yourself, *meo periculo*, that no quantity of opium ever did, or could, intoxicate. As to the tincture of opium (commonly called laudanum), *that* might certainly intoxicate, if a man could bear to take enough of it; but why? Because it contains so much proof spirits of wine, and not because it contains so much opium. But crude opium, I affirm peremptorily, is incapable of producing any state of body at all resembling that which is produced by alcohol; and not in *degree* only incapable, but even in *kind;* it is not in the quantity of its effects merely, but in the quality, that it differs altogether. The pleasure given by wine is always rapidly mounting, and tending to a crisis, after which as rapidly it declines; that from opium, when once generated, is stationary

[1] Of this, however, the learned appear latterly to have doubted; for, in a pirated edition of Buchan's "Domestic Medicine," which I once saw in the hands of a farmer's wife, who was studying it for the benefit of her health, the doctor was made to caution his readers against taking more than "twenty-five *ounces*" of laudanum at one dose. The true reading had doubtless been twenty-five *drops* or minims, which in a gross equation is held equivalent to one grain of average opium; but opium itself—crude opium—varies enormously in purity and strength; consequently the tincture prepared from it. And most of the medical connoisseurs whom I have known boiled their opium, so as to cleanse it from gross impurities.

for eight or ten hours: the first, to borrow a technical distinction from medicine, is a case of acute, the second of chronic, pleasure; the one is a flickering flame, the other a steady and equable glow. But the main distinction lies in this—that, whereas wine disorders the mental faculties, opium, on the contrary (if taken in a proper manner), introduces amongst them the most exquisite order, legislation, and harmony. Wine robs a man of his self-possession; opium sustains and reinforces it. Wine unsettles the judgment, and gives a preternatural brightness and a vivid exaltation to the contempts and the admirations, to the loves and the hatreds, of the drinker; opium, on the contrary, communicates serenity and equipoise to all the faculties, active or passive; and, with respect to the temper and moral feelings in general, it gives simply that sort of vital warmth which is approved by the judgment, and which would probably always accompany a bodily constitution of primeval or antediluvian health. Thus, for instance, opium, like wine, gives an expansion to the heart and the benevolent affections; but, then, with this remarkable difference, that, in the sudden development of kindheartedness which accompanies inebriation, there is always more or less of a maudlin and a transitory character, which exposes it to the contempt of the bystander. Men shake hands, swear eternal friendship, and shed tears—no mortal knows why; and the animal nature is clearly uppermost. But the expansion of the benigner feelings incident to opium is no febrile access, no fugitive paroxysm; it is a healthy restoration to that state which the mind would naturally recover upon the removal of any deep-seated irritation from pain that had disturbed and quarrelled with the impulses of a heart originally just and good. True it is that even wine up to a certain point, and with certain men, rather tends to exalt and to steady the intellect; I myself, who have never been a great wine-drinker, used to find that half-a-dozen glasses of wine advantageously affected the faculties, brightened and intensified the consciousness, and gave to the mind a feeling of being "ponderibus librata suis"; and certainly it is most absurdly said, in popular language, of any man, that he is *disguised* in liquor; for, on the contrary, most men are disguised by sobriety, and ex-

ceedingly disguised ; and it is when they are drinking that men display themselves in their true complexion of character ; which surely is not disguising themselves. But still, wine constantly leads a man to the brink of absurdity and extravagance ; and, beyond a certain point, it is sure to volatilise and to disperse the intellectual energies ; whereas opium always seems to compose what had been agitated, and to concentrate what had been distracted. In short, to sum up all in one word, a man who is inebriated, or tending to inebriation, is, and feels that he is, in a condition which calls up into supremacy the merely human, too often the brutal, part of his nature ; but the opium-eater (I speak of him simply *as* such, and assume that he is in a normal state of health) feels that the diviner part of his nature is paramount —that is, the moral affections are in a state of cloudless serenity, and high over all the great light of the majestic intellect.

This is the doctrine of the true church on the subject of opium : of which church I acknowledge myself to be the Pope (consequently infallible), and self-appointed *legate a latere* to all degrees of latitude and longitude. But then it is to be recollected that I speak from the ground of a large and profound personal experience, whereas most of the unscientific [1] authors who have at all treated of opium, and even

[1] Amongst the great herd of travellers, &c., who show sufficiently by their thoughtlessness that they never held any intercourse with opium, I must caution my readers specially against the brilliant author of "Anastasius" [Thomas Hope, 1770-1831, merchant-prince, oriental traveller, novelist, &c.] This gentleman, whose wit would lead one to presume him an opium-eater, has made it impossible to consider him in that character, from the grievous misrepresentation which he has given of its effects at pages 215-217 of Vol. I. Upon consideration, it must appear such to the author himself ; for, waiving the errors I have insisted on in the text, which (and others) are adopted in the fullest manner, he will himself admit that an old gentleman, "with a snow-white beard," who eats "ample doses of opium," and is yet able to deliver what is meant and received as very weighty counsel on the bad effects of that practice, is but an indifferent evidence that opium either kills people prematurely, or sends them into a madhouse. But, for my part, I see into this old gentleman and his motives : the fact is, he was enamoured of "the little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug" which Anastasius carried about him ; and no way of obtaining it so safe and so feasible occurred as

of those who have written professionally on the *materia medica*, make it evident, by the horror they express of it, that their experimental knowledge of its action is none at all. I will, however, candidly acknowledge that I have met with one person who bore evidence to its intoxicating power, such as staggered my own incredulity; for he was a surgeon, and had himself taken opium largely for a most miserable affection (past all hope of cure) seated in one particular organ. This affection was a subtle inflammation, not acute, but chronic; and with this he fought for more (I believe) than twenty years; fought victoriously, if victory it were, to make life supportable for himself, and during all that time to maintain in respectability a wife and a family of children altogether dependent on him.[1] I happened to say to him, that his

that of frightening its owner out of his wits. This commentary throws a new light upon the case, and greatly improves it as a story; for the old gentleman's speech, as a lecture on pharmacy, is absurd; but, considered as a hoax on Anastasius, it reads excellently.

[1] This surgeon it was who first made me aware of the dangerous variability in opium as to strength under the shifting proportions of its combination with alien impurities. Naturally, as a man professionally alive to the danger of creating any artificial need of opium beyond what the anguish of his malady at any rate demanded, trembling every hour on behalf of his poor children, lest, by any indiscretion of his own, he should precipitate the crisis of his disorder, he saw the necessity of reducing the daily dose to a *minimum*. But to do this he must first obtain the means of measuring the quantities of opium; not the apparent quantities as determined by weighing, but the *virtual* quantities after allowing for the alloy or varying amounts of impurity. This, however, was a visionary problem. To allow for it was simply impossible. The problem, therefore, changed its character. Not to measure the impurities was the object; for, whilst entangled with the operative and efficient parts of the opium, they could not be measured. To separate and eliminate the impure (or inert) parts, this was now the object. And this was effected finally by a particular mode of boiling the opium. That done, the residuum became equable in strength; and the daily doses could be nicely adjusted. About 18 grains formed his daily ration for many years. This, upon the common hospital equation, expresses 18 times 25 drops of laudanum. But, since 25 is $= \frac{1}{4}\frac{0}{0}$, therefore 18 times one quarter of a hundred is = one quarter of 1800, and that, I suppose, is 450. So much this surgeon averaged upon each day for about twenty years. Then suddenly began a fiercer stage of the anguish from his disease. But then, also, the fight was finished, and the victory was won. All duties were fulfilled: his children prosperously launched in life; and death, which to himself

enemies (as I had heard) charged him with talking nonsense on politics, and that his friends apologised for him, by suggesting that he was constantly in a state of intoxication from opium. Now, the accusation, said I, is not *primâ facie* an absurd one; but the defence *is*. To my surprise, however, he insisted that both his enemies and his friends were in the right. "I will maintain," said he, "that I *do* talk nonsense; and, secondly, I will maintain that I do not talk nonsense upon principle, or with any view to profit, but solely and simply," said he—"solely and simply—solely and simply (repeating it three times over) because I am drunk with opium; and that daily." I replied that, as to the allegation of his enemies, as it seemed to be established upon such respectable testimony, seeing that the three parties concerned all agreed so far, it did not become me to question it; but the defence set up I must demur to. He proceeded to discuss the matter, and to lay down his reasons; but it seemed to me so impolite to pursue an argument which must have presumed a man mistaken in a point belonging to his own profession, that I did not press him, even when his course of argument seemed open to objection; not to mention that a man who talks nonsense, even though "with no view to profit," is not altogether the most agreeable respondent in a dispute. I confess, however, that the authority of a surgeon, and one who was reputed a good one, may seem a weighty one to my prejudice; but still I must plead my experience, which was greater than his greatest by more than seven thousand drops a-day; and, though it was not possible to suppose a medical man unacquainted with the characteristic symptoms of vinous intoxication, yet it struck me that he might proceed on a logical error of using the word intoxication with too careless a latitude, extending it generically to all modes of nervous excitement, instead of restricting it to one special quality of pleasurable elevation, distinguished by well-known symptoms, and connected with tendencies not to be evaded. Two of these tendencies I will mention as diagnostic, or characteristic and inseparable marks of ordinary alcoholic intoxication, but which no excess

was becoming daily more necessary as a relief from torment, now fell injuriously upon nobody.

in the use of opium ever develops. One is the loss of self-command, in relation to all one's acts and purposes, which steals gradually (though with varying degrees of speed) over *all* persons indiscriminately when indulging in wine or distilled liquors beyond a certain limit. The tongue and other organs become unmanageable: the intoxicated man speaks inarticulately; and, with regard to certain words, makes efforts ludicrously earnest, yet oftentimes unavailing, to utter them. The eyes are bewildered, and see double; grasping too little, and too much. The hand aims awry. The legs stumble, and lose their power of *concurrent* action. To this result *all* people tend, though by varying rates of acceleration. Secondly, as another characteristic, it may be noticed that in alcoholic intoxication the movement is always along a kind of arch; the drinker rises through continual ascents to a summit or *apex*, from which he descends through corresponding steps of declension. There is a crowning point in the movement upwards, which once attained cannot be renewed: and it is the blind, unconscious, but always unsuccessful effort of the obstinate drinker to restore this supreme altitude of enjoyment which tempts him into excesses that become dangerous. After reaching this *acme* of genial pleasure, it is a mere necessity of the case to sink through corresponding stages of collapse. Some people have maintained, in my hearing, that they had been drunk upon green tea; and a medical student in London, for whose knowledge in his profession I have reason to feel great respect, assured me, the other day, that a patient, in recovering from an illness, had got drunk on a beef-steak. All turns, in fact, upon a rigorous definition of intoxication.

Having dwelt so much on this first and leading error in respect to opium, I shall notice briefly a second and a third; which are, that the elevation of spirits produced by opium is necessarily followed by a proportionate depression, and that the natural and even immediate consequence of opium is torpor and stagnation, animal as well as mental. The first of these errors I shall content myself with simply denying; assuring my reader that, for ten years during which I took opium not regularly but intermittingly, the day succeeding to that on which I allowed myself this luxury was always a day of unusually good spirits.

With respect to the torpor supposed to follow, or rather (if we were to credit the numerous pictures of Turkish opium-eaters) to accompany, the practice of opium-eating, I deny that also. Certainly, opium is classed under the head of narcotics, and some such effect it may produce in the end; but the primary effects of opium are always, and in the highest degree, to excite and stimulate the system. This first stage of its action always lasted with me, during my novitiate, for upwards of eight hours; so that it must be the fault of the opium-eater himself if he does not so time his exhibition of the dose as that the whole weight of its narcotic influence may descend upon his sleep. Turkish opium-eaters, it seems, are absurd enough to sit, like so many equestrian statues, on logs of wood as stupid as themselves. But, that the reader may judge of the degree in which opium is likely to stupefy the faculties of an Englishman, I shall (by way of treating the question illustratively, rather than argumentatively) describe the way in which I myself often passed an opium evening in London during the period between 1804 and 1812. It will be seen that at least opium did not move me to seek solitude, and much less to seek inactivity, or the torpid state of self-involution ascribed to the Turks. I give this account at the risk of being pronounced a crazy enthusiast or visionary; but I regard that little. I must desire my reader to bear in mind that I was a hard student, and at severe studies for all the rest of my time; and certainly I had a right occasionally to relaxations as well as other people.

The late Duke of Norfolk[1] used to say, "Next Monday, wind and weather permitting, I purpose to be drunk"; and in like manner I used to fix beforehand how often within a

[1] "*The late Duke of Norfolk*":—My authority was the late Sir George Beaumont, an old familiar acquaintance of the duke's. But such expressions are always liable to grievous misapplication. By "the late" duke Sir George meant that duke once so well known to the nation as the partisan friend of Fox, Burke, Sheridan, &c., at the era of the great French Revolution in 1789-93. Since *his* time, I believe there have been three generations of ducal Howards: who are always interesting to the English nation: first, from the bloody historic traditions surrounding their great house; secondly from the fact of their being at the head of the British Peerage.

given time, when, and with what accessory circumstances of festal joy, I would commit a debauch of opium. This was seldom more than once in three weeks; for at that time I could not have ventured to call every day (as afterwards I did) for "*a glass of laudanum negus, warm, and without sugar.*" No; once in three weeks sufficed; and the time selected was either a Tuesday or a Saturday night; my reason for which was this:—Tuesday and Saturday were for many years the regular nights of performance at the King's Theatre (or Opera House); and there it was in those times that Grassini sang; and her voice (the richest of *contraltos*) was delightful to me beyond all that I had ever heard. Yes; or have since heard; or ever shall hear. I know not what may be the state of the opera-house now, having never been within its walls for seven or eight years; but at that time it was by much the most pleasant place of resort in London for passing an evening.[1] Half-a-guinea admitted you to the pit, under the troublesome condition, however, of being *en grande tenue.* But to the gallery five shillings admitted you; and that gallery was subject to far less annoyance than the pit of most theatres. The orchestra was distinguished by its sweet and melodious grandeur from all English orchestras; the composition of which, I confess, is not acceptable to my ear, from the predominance of the clangorous instruments, and in some instances from the tyranny of the violin. Thrilling was the pleasure with which almost always I heard this angelic Grassini. Shivering with expectation I sat, when the time drew near for her golden epiphany; shivering I rose from my seat, incapable of rest, when that heavenly and harp-like voice sang its own victorious welcome in its prelusive *threttánelo — threttánelo*[2] (*θρεττάνελω — θρεττάνελω*).

[1] I trust that my reader has not been so inattentive to the windings of my narrative as to fancy me speaking here of the Brown-Brunell and Pyment period. Naturally I had no money disposable at that period for the opera. I am speaking here of years stretching far beyond those boyish scenes—interludes in my Oxford life, or long after Oxford.

[2] "*Threttánelo—threttánelo*":—The beautiful representative echo by which Aristophanes expresses the sound of the Grecian *phorminx*, or of some other instrument, which conjecturally has been shown most to resemble our modern European harp. In the case of ancient

The choruses were divine to hear; and, when Grassini[1] appeared in some interlude, as she often did, and poured forth her passionate soul as Andromache at the tomb of Hector, &c., I question whether any Turk, of all that ever entered the paradise of opium-eaters, can have had half the pleasure I had. But, indeed, I honour the barbarians too much by supposing them capable of any pleasures approaching to the intellectual ones of an Englishman. For music is an intellectual or a sensual pleasure, according to the temperament of him who hears it. And, by the bye, with the exception of the fine extravaganza on that subject in "Twelfth Night," I do not recollect more than one thing said adequately on the subject of music in all literature. It is a passage in the "Religio Medici"[2] of Sir T. Browne, and, though chiefly remarkable for its sublimity, has also a philosophic value, inasmuch as it points to the true theory of musical effects. The mistake of most people is, to suppose that it is by the ear they communicate with music, and therefore that they are purely passive as to its effects. But this is not so; it is by the reaction of the mind upon the notices of the ear (the *matter* coming by the senses, the *form* from the mind) that the pleasure is constructed; and therefore it is that people of equally good ear differ so much in this point from one another. Now opium, by greatly in-

Hebrew instruments used in the temple service, random and idle must be all the guesses through the Greek Septuagint or the Latin Vulgate to identify any one of them. But as to Grecian instruments the case is different; always there is a remote chance of digging up some marble sculpture of orchestral appurtenances and properties.

[1] Yet all things change: this same Grassini, whom once I adored, afterwards, when gorged with English gold, went off to Paris; and, when I heard on what terms she lived with a man so unmagnanimous as Napoleon, I came to hate her. Did I complain of any man's hating England, or teaching a woman to hate her benefactress? Not at all; but simply of his adopting at second-hand the malice of a jealous nation, with which originally he could have had no sincere sympathy. Hate us, if you please; but not sycophantishly, by way of paying court to others.

[2] I have not the book at this moment to consult; but I think the passage begins, "And even that tavern music, which makes one man merry, another mad, in me strikes a deep fit of devotion," &c. [The passage, which is very nearly in these words, occurs in Section IX of the Second Part of the *Religio Medici*.—M.]

creasing the activity of the mind, generally increases, of necessity, that particular mode of its activity by which we are able to construct out of the raw material of organic sound an elaborate intellectual pleasure. "But," says a friend, "a succession of musical sounds is to me like a collection of Arabic characters: I can attach no ideas to them." Ideas! my dear friend! there is no occasion for them; all that class of ideas which can be available in such a case has a language of representative feelings. But this is a subject foreign to my present purposes; it is sufficient to say that a chorus, &c., of elaborate harmony displayed before me, as in a piece of arras-work, the whole of my past life—not as if recalled by an act of memory, but as if present and incarnated in the music; no longer painful to dwell upon, but the detail of its incidents removed, or blended in some hazy abstraction, and its passions exalted, spiritualised, and sublimed. All this was to be had for five shillings—that being the price of admission to the gallery; or, if a man preferred the high-bred society of the pit, even this might be had for half-a-guinea; or, in fact, for half-a-crown less, by purchasing beforehand a ticket at the music shops. And, over and above the music of the stage and the orchestra, I had all around me, in the intervals of the performance, the music of the Italian language talked by Italian women—for the gallery was usually crowded with Italians—and I listened with a pleasure such as that with which Weld, the traveller, lay and listened, in Canada, to the sweet laughter of Indian women[1]; for, the less you understand of a language, the more sensible you are to the melody or harshness of its sounds. For such a purpose, therefore, it was an advantage to me that in those days I was a poor Italian scholar, reading it but little, and not speaking it at all, nor understanding a tenth part of what I heard spoken.

These were my opera pleasures; but another pleasure I had, which, as it could be had only on a Saturday night, occasionally struggled with my love of the opera; for, in those years, Tuesday and Saturday were the regular opera nights. On this subject I am afraid I shall be rather ob-

[1] Isaac Weld, author of *Travels in the United States and Canada*, published 1799.—M.

scure, but, I can assure the reader, not at all more so than Marinus in his Life of Proclus, or many other biographers and autobiographers of fair reputation. This pleasure, I have said, was to be had only on a Saturday night. What, then, was Saturday night to me more than any other night? I had no labours that I rested from; no wages to receive; what needed I to care for Saturday night, more than as it was a summons to hear Grassini? True, most logical reader; what thou sayest is, and ever will be, unanswerable. And yet so it was that, whereas different men throw their feelings into different channels, and most men are apt to show their interest in the concerns of the poor chiefly by sympathy with their distresses and sorrows, I at that time was disposed to express mine by sympathising with their pleasures. The pains of poverty I had lately seen too much of—more than I wished to remember; but the pleasures of the poor, their hopes, their consolations of spirit, and their restings from toil, can never become oppressive to contemplate. Now, Saturday night is the season for the chief regular and periodic return of rest to the poor, and to all that live by bodily labour; in this point the most hostile sects unite, and acknowledge a common link of brotherhood: almost all Christendom rests from its labours. It is a rest introductory to another rest, and divided by a whole day and two nights from the renewal of toil. On this account I feel always on a Saturday night as though I also were released from some yoke of bondage, had some wages to receive, and some luxury of repose to enjoy. For the sake, therefore, of witnessing, upon as large a scale as possible, a spectacle with which my sympathy was so entire, I used often, on Saturday nights, after I had taken opium, to wander forth, without much regarding the direction or the distance, to all the markets, and other parts of London, whither the poor resort on a Saturday night for laying out their wages. Many a family party, consisting of a man, his wife, and sometimes one or two of their children, have I listened to, as they stood consulting on their ways and means, or the strength of their exchequer, or the price of household articles. Gradually I became familiar with their wishes, their difficulties, and their opinions. Sometimes there might be heard murmurs of dis-

content; but far oftener expressions on the countenance, or uttered in words, of patience, of hope, and of reconciliation to their lot. Generally speaking, the impression left upon my mind was that the poor are practically more philosophic than the rich; that they show a more ready and cheerful submission to what they consider as irremediable evils or irreparable losses. Whenever I saw occasion, or could do it without appearing to be intrusive, I joined their parties, and gave my opinion upon the matter in discussion, which, if not always judicious, was always received indulgently. If wages were a little higher, or were expected to be so—if the quartern loaf were a little lower, or it was reported that onions and butter were falling—I was glad; yet, if the contrary were true, I drew from opium some means of consolation. For opium (like the bee, that extracts its materials indiscriminately from roses and from the soot[1] of chimneys) can overrule all feelings into a compliance with the master-key. Some of these rambles led me to great distances; for an opium-eater is too happy to observe the motion of time. And sometimes, in my attempts to steer homewards, upon nautical principles, by fixing my eye on the pole-star, and seeking ambitiously for a north-west passage, instead of circumnavigating all the capes and headlands I had doubled in my outward voyage, I came suddenly upon such knotty problems of alleys, alleys without soundings, such enigmatical entries, and such sphinx's riddles of streets without obvious outlets or thoroughfares, as must baffle the audacity of porters, and confound the intellects of hackney coachmen. I could almost have believed, at times, that I must be the first discoverer of some of these *terræ incognitæ*, and doubted whether they had yet been laid down in the modern charts of London. Positively, in one line of communication to the south of Holborn for foot passengers (known, I doubt not, to many of my

[1] "*Soot*":—In the large capacious chimneys of the rustic cottages throughout the Lake district you can see up the entire cavity from the seat which you occupy, as an honoured visitor, in the chimney corner. There I used often to hear (though not to see) bees. Their murmuring was audible, though their bodily forms were too small to be visible at that altitude. On inquiry, I found that soot (chiefly from wood and peats) was useful in some stage of their wax or honey manufacture.

London readers), the road lay through a man's kitchen ; and, as it was a small kitchen, you needed to steer cautiously, or else you might run foul of the dripping-pan. For all this, however, I paid a heavy price in distant years, when the human face tyrannised over my dreams, and the perplexities of my steps in London came back and haunted my sleep with the feeling of perplexities, moral or intellectual, that brought confusion to the reason, that brought anguish and remorse to the conscience.

Thus I have shown, or tried to show, that opium does not of necessity produce inactivity or torpor ; but that, on the contrary, it often led me into markets and theatres. Yet, in candour, I will admit that markets and theatres are not the appropriate haunts of the opium-eater, when in the divinest state incident to his enjoyment. In that state crowds become an oppression to him ; music, even, too sensual and gross. He naturally seeks solitude and silence, as indispensable conditions of those trances, or profoundest reveries, which are the crown and consummation of what opium can do for human nature. I, whose disease it was to meditate too much and to observe too little, and who, upon my first entrance at college, was nearly falling into a deep melancholy, from brooding too much on the sufferings which I had witnessed in London, was sufficiently aware of these tendencies in my own thoughts to do all I could to counteract them. I was, indeed, like a person who, according to the old Pagan legend, had entered the cave of Trophonius ; and the remedies I sought were to force myself into society, and to keep my understanding in continual activity upon subtleties of philosophic speculation. But for these remedies, I should certainly have become hypochondriacally melancholy. In after years, however, when my cheerfulness was more fully re-established, I yielded to my natural inclination for a solitary life. At that time I often fell into such reveries after taking opium ; and many a time it has happened to me on a summer night—when I have been seated at an open window, from which I could overlook the sea at a mile below me, and could at the same time command a view of some great town standing on a different radius of my circular prospect, but at nearly the same distance—that from sunset to sunrise, all

through the hours of night, I have continued motionless, as if frozen, without consciousness of myself as of an object anywise distinct from the multiform scene which I contemplated from above. Such a scene in all its elements was not unfrequently realised for me on the gentle eminence of Everton. Obliquely to the left lay the many-languaged town of Liverpool; obliquely to the right, the multitudinous sea. The scene itself was somewhat typical of what took place in such a reverie. The town of Liverpool represented the earth, with its sorrows and its graves left behind, yet not out of sight, nor wholly forgotten. The ocean, in everlasting but gentle agitation, yet brooded over by dove-like calm, might not unfitly typify the mind, and the mood which then swayed it. For it seemed to me as if then first I stood at a distance aloof from the uproar of life; as if the tumult, the fever, and the strife, were suspended; a respite were granted from the secret burdens of the heart,—some sabbath of repose, some resting from human labours. Here were the hopes which blossom in the paths of life, reconciled with the peace which is in the grave; motions of the intellect as unwearied as the heavens, yet for all anxieties a halcyon calm; tranquillity that seemed no product of inertia, but as if resulting from mighty and equal antagonisms; infinite activities, infinite repose.

O just, subtle, and all-conquering opium! that, to the hearts of rich and poor alike, for the wounds that will never heal, and for the pangs of grief that "tempt the spirit to rebel," bringest an assuaging balm;—eloquent opium! that with thy potent rhetoric stealest away the purposes of wrath, pleadest effectually for relenting pity, and through one night's heavenly sleep callest back to the guilty man the visions of his infancy, and hands washed pure from blood; —O just and righteous opium! that to the chancery of dreams summonest, for the triumphs of despairing innocence, false witnesses, and confoundest perjury, and dost reverse the sentences of unrighteous judges;—thou buildest upon the bosom of darkness, out of the fantastic imagery of the brain, cities and temples, beyond the art of Phidias and Praxiteles, beyond the splendours of Babylon and Hekatómpylos[1];

[1] *i.e.*, the *hundred-gated* (from ἑκατόν, *hekaton*, a hundred, and

and, "from the anarchy of dreaming sleep," callest into sunny light the faces of long-buried beauties, and the blessed household countenances, cleansed from the "dishonours of the grave." Thou only givest these gifts to man; and thou hast the keys of Paradise, O just, subtle, and mighty opium!

. . . . . .

Courteous, and I hope indulgent, reader, having accompanied me thus far, now let me request you to move onwards for about eight years; that is to say, from 1804 (when I said that my acquaintance with opium began) to 1812. The years of academic life are now over and gone—almost forgotten; the student's cap no longer presses my temples; if my cap exists at all, it presses those of some youthful scholar, I trust, as happy as myself, and as passionate a lover of knowledge. My gown is, by this time, I dare to say, in the same condition with many thousands of excellent books in the Bodleian,—viz. diligently perused by certain studious moths and worms; or departed, however (which is all that I know of its fate), to that great reservoir of *somewhere*, to which all the tea-cups, tea-caddies, tea-pots, tea-kettles, &c., have departed, which occasional resemblances in the present generation of tea-cups, &c., remind me of having once possessed, but of whose departure and final fate I, in common with most gownsmen of either university, could give but an obscure and conjectural history. The persecutions of the chapel bell, sounding its unwelcome summons to matins, interrupts my slumbers no longer; the porter who rang it is dead, and has ceased to disturb anybody; and I, with many others who suffered much from his tintinnabulous propensities, have now agreed to overlook his errors, and have forgiven him. Even with the bell I am now in charity; it rings, I suppose, as formerly, thrice a-day, and cruelly annoys, I doubt not, many worthy gentlemen, and disturbs their peace of mind; but, as to me, in this year 1812, I regard its treacherous voice no longer (treacherous I call it, for, by some refinement of malice, it spoke in as sweet and silvery tones as if it had been inviting one to a

πύλη, *pyle*, a gate). This epithet of hundred-gated was applied to the Egyptian Thebes in contradistinction to the ἑπτάπυλος (*heptápylos*, or *seven-gated*) which designated the Grecian Thebes, within one day's journey of Athens.

party); its tones have no longer, indeed, power to reach me, let the wind sit as favourably as the malice of the bell itself could wish; for I am two hundred and fifty miles away from it, and buried in the depth of mountains.

And what am I doing amongst the mountains? Taking opium. Yes; but what else? Why, reader, in 1812, the year we are now arrived at, as well as for some years previous, I have been chiefly studying German metaphysics, in the writings of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, &c. And how, and in what manner, do I live? in short, what class or description of men do I belong to? I am at this period—viz. in 1812—living in a cottage; and with a single female servant (*honi soit qui mal y pense*), who, amongst my neighbours, passes by the name of my "housekeeper." And, as a scholar and a man of learned education, I may presume to class myself as an unworthy member of that indefinite body called *gentlemen*. Partly on the ground I have assigned—partly because, from having no visible calling or business, it is rightly judged that I must be living on my private fortune—I am so classed by my neighbours; and, by the courtesy of modern England, I am usually addressed on letters, &c., *Esquire*, though having, I fear, in the rigorous construction of heralds, antique or antic, dressed like the knaves of spades or diamonds, but slender pretensions to that distinguished honour;—yes, in popular estimation, I am X. Y. Z.,[1] Esquire, but not Justice of the Peace, nor Custos Rotulorum. Am I married? Not yet. And I still take opium? On Saturday nights. And, perhaps, have taken it unblushingly ever since "the rainy Sunday," and "the stately Pantheon," and "the beatific druggist" of 1804? Even so. And how do I find my health after all this opium-eating? in short, how do I do? Why, pretty well, I thank you, reader. In fact, if I dared to say the real and simple truth (though, in order to satisfy the theories of some medical men, I ought to be ill), I was never better in my life than in the spring of 1812; and I hope sincerely that the quantity of claret, port, or "London particular Madeira," which, in all probability, you, good reader, have taken, and design to take, for every term of

[1] These initials were De Quincey's usual signature to his articles in the *London Magazine*.—M.

eight years during your natural life, may as little disorder your health as mine was disordered by all the opium I had taken (though in quantity such that I might well have bathed and swum in it) for the eight years between 1804 and 1812. Hence you may see again the danger of taking any medical advice from "Anastasius"[1]; in divinity, for anything I know, he may be a safe counsellor, but not in medicine. No; it is far better to consult Dr. Buchan, as I did; for I never forgot that worthy man's excellent suggestion, and I was "particularly careful not to take above five-and-twenty ounces of laudanum." To this moderation and temperate use of the article I may ascribe it, I suppose, that as yet at least (that is, in 1812) I am ignorant and unsuspicious of the avenging terrors which opium has in store for those who abuse its long-suffering. At the same time, as yet I had been only a *dilettante* eater of opium; even eight years' practice, with the single precaution of allowing sufficient intervals between every indulgence, has not been sufficient to make opium necessary to me as an article of daily diet.

But now comes a different era. Move on, then, if you please, reader, to 1813. In the summer of the year we have just quitted I had suffered much in bodily health from distress of mind connected with a melancholy event. This event, being nowise related to the subject now before me, further than through the bodily illness which it produced, I need not more particularly notice. Whether this illness of 1812 had any share in that of 1813, I know not; but so it was that, in the latter year, I was attacked by a most appalling irritation of the stomach, in all respects the same as that which had caused me so much suffering in youth, and accompanied by a revival of all the old dreams. Now, then, it was—viz. in the year 1813—that I became a regular and confirmed (no longer an intermitting) opium-eater. And

[1] "*Anastasius*":—The reader of this generation will marvel at these repeated references to "Anastasius": it is now an almost forgotten book, so vast has been the deluge of novel-writing talent, really original and powerful, which has overflowed our literature during the lapse of thirty-five years from the publication of these Confessions. "Anastasius" was written by the famous and opulent Mr. Hope, and was in 1821 a book both of high reputation and of great influence amongst the leading circles of society.

here I find myself in a perplexing dilemma. Either, on the one hand, I must exhaust the reader's patience by such a detail of my malady, and of my struggles with it, as might suffice to establish the fact of my inability to wrestle any longer with irritation and constant suffering; or, on the other hand, by passing lightly over this critical part of my story, I must forgo the benefit of a stronger impression left on the mind of the reader, and must lay myself open to the misconstruction of having slipped, by the easy and gradual steps of self-indulging persons, from the first to the final stage of opium-eating (a misconstruction to which there will be a lurking predisposition in most readers from my previous acknowledgments). This is the dilemma, the first horn of which is not to be thought of. It remains, then, that I *postulate* so much as is necessary for my purpose. And let me take as full credit for this as if I had demonstrated it, good reader, at the expense of your patience and my own. Be not so ungenerous as to let me suffer in your good opinion through my own forbearance and regard for your comfort. No; believe all that I ask of you—viz. that I could resist no longer—believe it liberally, and as an act of grace, or else in mere prudence; for, if not, then in my next edition I will make you believe and tremble; and, *à force d'ennuyer*, by mere dint of pandiculation, vulgarly called yawning, I will terrify all readers of mine from ever again questioning any postulate that I shall think fit to make.

This, then, let me repeat: I postulate that, at the time I began to take opium daily, I could not have done otherwise. Whether, indeed, afterwards I might not have succeeded in breaking off the habit, even when it seemed to me that all efforts would be unavailing, and whether many of the innumerable efforts which I *did* make might not have been carried much further, and my gradual re-conquests of lost ground might not have been followed up much more energetically—these are questions which I must decline. Perhaps I might make out a case of palliation, but (shall I speak ingenuously?) I confess it, as a besetting infirmity of mine, that I am too much of an Eudæmonist; I hanker too much after a state of happiness, both for myself and others; I cannot face misery, whether my own or not, with an eye of

sufficient firmness, and am little capable of encountering present pain for the sake of any reversionary benefit. On some other matters, I can agree with the gentlemen of The Porch [1] at Manchester in affecting the Stoic philosophy; but not in this. Here I take the liberty of an Eclectic philosopher, and I look out for some courteous and considerate sect that will condescend more to the infirm condition of an opium-eater,—that are pleasant men and courteous, such as Chaucer describes,[2] to hear confession or to give absolution, and will show some conscience in the penances they inflict, or the efforts of abstinence they exact from poor sinners like myself. An inhuman moralist I can no more endure, in my nervous state, than opium that has not been boiled. At any rate, he who summons me to send out a large freight of self-denial and mortification upon any cruising voyage of moral improvement must make it clear to my understanding that the concern is a hopeful one. At my time of life (six-and-thirty years of age [3]), it cannot be supposed that I have much energy to spare; in fact, I find it all little enough for the intellectual labours I have on my hands; and, therefore, let no man expect to frighten me, by a few hard words, into embarking any part of it upon desperate adventures of morality.

Desperate or not, however, the issue of the struggle in 1813 was what I have mentioned; and from this date the reader is to consider me as a regular and confirmed opium-eater, of whom to ask whether on any particular day he had or had not taken opium would be to ask whether his lungs had performed respiration, or the heart fulfilled its functions. Now, then, reader, you understand what I am; and you are

[1] A handsome news-room, of which I was very courteously made free, in passing through Manchester, by several gentlemen of that place, is called either *The Porch* or *The Portico*, which in Greek is the *Stoa;* from which I, a stranger in Manchester, inferred that the subscribers meant to profess themselves Stoics, or followers of Zeno. But I have been since assured that this is a mistake.

[2] "Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun"

is part of Chaucer's character of the Friar in the *Canterbury Tales.*—M.

[3] This was written at the time of original publication.

by this time aware that no old gentleman, "with a snow-white beard," will have any chance of persuading me (like Anastasius) to surrender "the little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug." No; I give notice to all, whether moralists or surgeons, that, whatever be their pretensions and skill in their respective lines of practice, they must not hope for any countenance from me, if they think to begin by any savage proposition for a Lent or Ramadan of abstinence from opium. This being fully understood between us, we shall in future sail before the wind. Now, then, reader, from the year 1813, where all this time we have been sitting down and loitering, rise up, if you please; walk forward about three years more; draw up the curtain, and you shall see me in a new character.

If any man, poor or rich, were to say that he would tell us what had been the happiest day in his life, and the why and the wherefore, I suppose that we should all cry out, Hear him! hear him! As to the happiest day, that must be very difficult for any wise man to assign; because any event that could occupy so distinguished a place in a man's retrospect of life, or be entitled to have shed a special, separate, and supreme felicity on any one day, ought to be of such an enduring character as that (accidents apart) it should have continued to shed the same felicity, or one not distinguishably less, on very many years together. To the happiest *lustrum*, however, or even to the happiest *year*, a man may perhaps allowably point without discountenance from wisdom. This year, in *my* case, reader, was the one which we have now reached; though it stood, I confess, as a parenthesis between years of a gloomier character. It was a year of brilliant water (to speak after the manner of jewellers), set, as it were, and insulated, in the gloomy umbrage of opium. Strange as it may sound, I had a little before this time descended suddenly, and without any considerable effort, from three hundred and twenty grains of opium (that is, eight[1] thousand drops of laudanum) per day,

[1] I here reckon twenty-five drops of laudanum as equivalent to one grain of opium; which, I believe, is the common estimate. However, as both may be considered variable quantities (the crude opium varying much in strength, and the tincture still more), I suppose that no

to forty grains, or one-eighth part. Instantaneously, and as if by magic, the cloud of profoundest melancholy which rested upon my brain, like some black vapours that I have seen roll away from the summit of a mountain, drew off in one week ; passed away with its murky banners as simultaneously as a ship that has been stranded, and is floated off by a spring-tide,

"That moveth altogether, if it move at all."

Now, then, I was again happy : I now took only one thousand drops of laudanum per day—and what was that ? A latter spring had come to close up the season of youth. My brain performed its functions as healthily as ever before. I read Kant again ; and again I understood him, or fancied that I did. Again my feelings of pleasure expanded themselves to all around me ; and, if any man from Oxford or Cambridge, or from neither, had been announced to me in my unpretending cottage, I should have welcomed him with as sumptuous a reception as so poor a man could offer. Whatever else might be wanting to a wise man's happiness, of laudanum I would have given him as much as he wished, and in a silver-gilt, if not golden, cup. And, by the way, now that I speak of giving laudanum away, I remember about this time a little incident, which I mention because, trifling as it was, the reader will soon meet it again in my dreams, which it influenced more fearfully than could be imagined. One day a Malay knocked at my door. What business a Malay could have to transact amongst the recesses of English mountains is not my business to conjecture ; but possibly he was on his road to a seaport—viz., Whitehaven, Workington, &c.—about forty miles distant.[1]

infinitesimal accuracy can be had in such a calculation. Tea-spoons vary as much in size as opium in strength. Small ones hold about one hundred drops ; so that eight thousand drops, which obviously read into eighty hundred drops, fill a *small* tea-spoon eighty times. But large modern tea-spoons hold very much more. Some even approach in their capacity to dessert-spoons. The reader sees how much I kept within Dr. Buchan's indulgent allowance.

[1] Between the seafaring populations on the coast of Lancashire and the corresponding populations on the coast of Cumberland (such as Ravenglass, Whitehaven, Workington, Maryport, &c.) there was a

The servant who opened the door to him was a young girl, born and bred amongst the mountains, who had never seen an Asiatic dress of any sort: his turban, therefore, confounded her not a little; and, as it turned out that *his* knowledge of English was exactly commensurate with *hers* of Malay, there seemed to be an impassable gulf fixed between all communication of ideas, if either party had happened to possess any. In this dilemma, the girl, recollecting the reputed learning of her master (and, doubtless, giving me credit for a knowledge of all the languages of the earth, besides, perhaps, a few of the lunar ones), came and gave me to understand that there was a sort of demon below, whom she clearly imagined that my art could exorcise from the house. The group which presented itself, arranged as it was by accident, though not very elaborate, took hold of my fancy and my eye more powerfully than any of the statuesque attitudes or groups exhibited in the ballets at the opera-house, though so ostentatiously complex. In a cottage kitchen, but not looking so much like *that* as a rustic hall of entrance, being pannelled on the wall with dark wood, that from age and rubbing resembled oak, stood the Malay, his turban and loose trousers of dingy white relieved upon the dark pannelling; he had placed himself nearer to the girl than she seemed to relish, though her native spirit of mountain intrepidity contended with the feeling of simple awe which her countenance expressed as she gazed upon the tiger-cat before her. A more striking picture there could not be imagined than the beautiful English face of the girl,[1]

slender current of interchange constantly going on, and especially in the days of pressgangs—in part by sea, but in part also by land. By the way, I may mention, as an interesting fact which I discovered from an almanack and itinerary, dated about the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign (say 1579), that the official route in *her* days for queen's messengers to the north of Ireland, and of course for travellers generally, was not (as now) through Grasmere, and thence by St. John's Vale, Threlkeld (for the short cut by Shoulthwaite Moss was then unknown), Keswick, Cockermouth, and Whitehaven. Up to St. Oswald's Church, Gresmere (so it was then spelled, in deference to its Danish original), the route lay as at present. Thence it turned round the lake to the left, crossed Hammerscar, up *Little* Langdale, across Wrynose to Egremont, and from Egremont to Whitehaven.

[1] This girl, Barbara Lewthwaite, was already at that time a person

and its exquisite bloom, together with her erect and independent attitude, contrasted with the sallow and bilious skin of the Malay, veneered with mahogany tints by climate and marine air, his small, fierce, restless eyes, thin lips, slavish gestures and adorations. Half-hidden by the ferocious-looking Malay, was a little child from a neighbouring cottage, who had crept in after him, and was now in the act of reverting its head and gazing upwards at the turban and the fiery eyes beneath it, whilst with one hand he caught at the dress of the lovely girl for protection.

My knowledge of the oriental tongues is not remarkably extensive, being, indeed, confined to two words—the Arabic word for barley, and the Turkish for opium (*madjoon*), which I have learned from "Anastasius." And, as I had neither a Malay dictionary, nor even Adelung's "Mithridates," which might have helped me to a few words, I addressed him in some lines from the "Iliad"; considering that, of such languages as I possessed, the Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an oriental one. He worshipped me in a devout manner, and replied in what I suppose to have been Malay. In this way I saved my reputation as a linguist with my neighbours; for the Malay had no means of betraying the secret. He lay down upon the floor for about an hour, and then pursued his journey. On his departure, I presented him, *inter alia*, with a piece of opium. To him, as a native of the East, I could have no doubt that

of some poetic distinction, being (unconsciously to herself) the chief speaker in a little pastoral poem of Wordsworth's. That she was really beautiful, and not merely so described by me for the sake of improving the picturesque effect, the reader will judge from this line in the poem, written perhaps ten years earlier, when Barbara might be six years old:—

"'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare!"

This, coming from William Wordsworth, both a fastidious judge and a truth-speaker of the severest literality, argues some real pretensions to beauty, or real at that time. But it is notorious that, in the anthologies of earth through all her zones, one flower beyond every other is liable to change, which flower is the countenance of woman. Whether in his fine stanzas upon "Mutability," where the most pathetic instances of this earthly doom are solemnly arrayed, Spenser has dwelt sufficiently upon this, the saddest of all, I do not remember. —[See Note, *Barbara Lewthwaite*, in Appendix.—M.]

opium was not less familiar than his daily bread; and the expression of his face convinced me that it was. Nevertheless, I was struck with some little consternation when I saw him suddenly raise his hand to his mouth, and bolt the whole, divided into three pieces, at one mouthful. The quantity was enough to kill some half-dozen dragoons, together with their horses, supposing neither bipeds nor quadrupeds to be regularly trained opium-eaters. I felt some alarm for the poor creature; but what could be done? I had given him the opium in pure compassion for his solitary life, since, if he had travelled on foot from London, it must be nearly three weeks since he could have exchanged a thought with any human being. Ought I to have violated the laws of hospitality by having him seized and drenched with an emetic, thus frightening him into a notion that we were going to sacrifice him to some English idol? No: there was clearly no help for it. The mischief, if any, was done. He took his leave, and for some days I felt anxious; but, as I never heard of any Malay, or of any man in a turban, being found dead on any part of the very slenderly peopled road between Grasmere and Whitehaven, I became satisfied that he was familiar with opium,[1] and that I must doubtless have done him the service I designed, by giving him one night of respite from the pains of wandering.

This incident I have digressed to mention, because this Malay (partly from the picturesque exhibition he assisted to frame, partly from the anxiety I connected with his image for some days) fastened afterwards upon my fancy, and through *that* upon my dreams, bringing with him other Malays worse than himself, that ran "a-muck"[2] at me, and led me into a world of nocturnal troubles. But, to quit this

[1] This, however, is not a necessary conclusion; the varieties of effect produced by opium on different constitutions are infinite. A London magistrate (Harriott's "Struggles through Life," vol. iii. p. 391, third edition) has recorded that, on the first occasion of his trying laudanum for the gout, he took FORTY drops, the next night SIXTY, and on the fifth night EIGHTY, without any effect whatever; and this at an advanced age.

[2] See the common accounts, in any eastern traveller or voyager, of the frantic excesses committed by Malays who have taken opium, or are reduced to desperation by ill luck at gambling.

episode, and to return to my intercalary year of happiness. I have already said that, on a subject so important to us all as happiness, we should listen with pleasure to any man's experience or experiments, even though he were but a ploughboy, who cannot be supposed to have ploughed very deep in such an intractable soil as that of human pains and pleasures, or to have conducted his researches upon any very enlightened principles. But I, who have taken happiness, both in a solid and a liquid shape, both boiled and unboiled, both East Indian and Turkish—who have conducted my experiments upon this interesting subject with a sort of galvanic battery, and have, for the general benefit of the world, inoculated myself, as it were, with the poison of eight thousand drops of laudanum per day (and for the same reason as a French surgeon inoculated himself lately with a cancer, an English one twenty years ago with plague, and a third,[1] who was also English, with hydrophobia), I, it will be admitted, must surely now know what happiness is, if anybody does. And therefore I will here lay down an analysis of happiness; and, as the most interesting mode of communicating it, I will give it, not didactically, but wrapped up and involved in a picture of one evening, as I spent every evening during the intercalary year when laudanum, though taken daily, was to me no more than the elixir of pleasure.

Let there be a cottage, standing in a valley,[2] eighteen

[1] He was a surgeon at Brighton.

[2] The cottage and the valley concerned in this description were not imaginary: the valley was the lovely one, *in those days*, of Grasmere; and the cottage was occupied for more than twenty years by myself, as immediate successor, in the year 1809, to Wordsworth. Looking to the limitation here laid down—viz. *in those days*—the reader will inquire in what way *Time* can have affected the beauty of Grasmere. Do the Westmoreland valleys turn grey-headed? O reader! this is a painful memento for some of us! Thirty years ago, a gang of Vandals (nameless, I thank heaven, to me), for the sake of building a mail-coach road that never would be wanted, carried, at a cost of £3000 to the defrauded parish, a horrid causeway of sheer granite masonry, for three-quarters-of-a-mile, right through the loveliest succession of secret forest dells and shy recesses of the lake, margined by unrivalled ferns, amongst which was the *Osmunda regalis*. This sequestered angle of Grasmere is described by Wordsworth, as it unveiled itself on a September morning, in the exquisite poems on the "Naming of Places."

miles from any town; no spacious valley, but about two miles long by three-quarters-of-a-mile in average width,—the benefit of which provision is that all the families resident within its circuit will compose, as it were, one larger household, personally familiar to your eye, and more or less interesting to your affections. Let the mountains be real mountains, between three and four thousand feet high, and the cottage a real cottage, not (as a witty author has it) "a cottage with a double coach-house"; let it be, in fact (for I must abide by the actual scene), a white cottage, embowered with flowering shrubs, so chosen as to unfold a succession of flowers upon the walls, and clustering around the windows, through all the months of spring, summer, and autumn; beginning, in fact, with May roses, and ending with jasmine. Let it, however, *not* be spring, nor summer, nor autumn; but winter, in its sternest shape. This is a most important point in the science of happiness. And I am surprised to see people overlook it, as if it were actually matter of congratulation that winter is going, or, if coming, is not likely to be a severe one. On the contrary, I put up a petition, annually, for as much snow, hail, frost, or storm of one kind or other, as the skies can possibly afford. Surely everybody is aware of the divine pleasures which attend a winter fireside—candles at four o'clock, warm hearth-rugs, tea, a fair tea-maker, shutters closed, curtains flowing in ample draperies on the floor, whilst the wind and rain are raging audibly without,

> "And at the doors and windows seem to call,
> As heaven and earth they would together mell;
> Yet the least entrance find they none at all;
> Whence sweeter grows our rest secure in massy hall."
>
> *Castle of Indolence.*

All these are items in the description of a winter evening

From this also—viz. this spot of ground, and this magnificent crest (the Osmunda)—was suggested that unique line, the finest independent line through all the records of verse,

> "Or lady of the lake,
> Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance."

Rightly, therefore, did I introduce this limitation. The Grasmere before and after this outrage were two different vales.

which must surely be familiar to everybody born in a high latitude. And it is evident that most of these delicacies cannot be ripened without weather stormy or inclement in some way or other. I am not "*particular*" whether it be snow, or black frost, or wind so strong that (as Mr. Anti-slavery Clarkson says) "you may lean your back against it like a post." I can put up even with rain, provided that it rains cats and dogs, or, as sailors say, "great guns and marline-spikes"; but something of the sort I must have; and, if I have it not, I think myself in a manner ill-used: for why am I called on to pay so heavily for winter in coals, candles, &c., if I am not to have the article good of its kind? No: a Canadian winter for my money, or a Russian one, where every man is but a co-proprietor with the north wind in the fee-simple of his own ears. Indeed, so great an epicure am I in this matter that I cannot relish a winter night fully if it be much past St. Thomas's Day, and have degenerated into disgusting tendencies towards vernal indications: in fact, it must be divided by a thick wall of dark nights from all return of light and sunshine. Start, therefore, at the first week of November: thence to the end of January, Christmas Eve being the meridian line, you may compute the period when happiness is in season,—which, in my judgment, enters the room with the tea-tray. For tea, though ridiculed by those who are naturally coarse in their nervous sensibilities, or are become so from wine-drinking, and are not susceptible of influence from so refined a stimulant, will always be the favourite beverage of the intellectual; and, for my part, I would have joined Dr. Johnson in a *bellum internecinum* against Jonas Hanway, or any other impious person who should have presumed to disparage it.[1] But here, to save

[1] Jonas Hanway, tourist, philanthropist, and author (1712-1786), and said to have been "the first man who ventured to walk the streets of London with an umbrella over his head," was a vehement opponent of tea, and got into conflict with Dr. Johnson on that subject, as appears from the following passage in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*:—"His defence of tea against Mr. Jonas Hanway's violent attack upon that elegant and popular beverage shows how very well a man of genius can write upon the slightest subject, when he writes, as the Italians say, *con amore*. I suppose no person ever enjoyed with more relish the influence of that fragrant leaf than Johnson. The quantities

myself the trouble of too much verbal description, I will introduce a painter, and give him directions for the rest of the picture. Painters do not like white cottages, unless a good deal weather-stained; but, as the reader now understands that it is a winter night, his services will not be required except for the *inside* of the house.

Paint me, then, a room seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a-half feet high. This, reader, is somewhat ambitiously styled, in my family, the drawing-room; but, being contrived "a double debt to pay," it is also, and more justly, termed the library; for it happens that books are the only article of property in which I am richer than my neighbours. Of these I have about five thousand, collected gradually since my eighteenth year. Therefore, painter, put as many as you can into this room. Make it populous with books; and, furthermore, paint me a good fire; and furniture plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar. And near the fire paint me a tea-table; and (as it is clear that no creature can come to see one on such a stormy night) place only two cups and saucers on the tea-tray; and, if you know how to paint such a thing, symbolically or otherwise, paint me an eternal tea-pot—eternal *a parte ante*, and *a parte post;* for I usually drink tea from eight o'clock at night to four in the morning. And, as it is very unpleasant to make tea, or to pour it out for one's-self, paint me a lovely young woman sitting at the table. Paint her arms like Aurora's, and her smiles like Hebe's; but no, dear M——! not even in jest let me insinuate that thy power to illuminate my cottage rests upon a tenure so perishable as mere personal beauty, or that the witchcraft of angelic smiles lies within the empire of any

which he drank of it at all hours were so great that his nerves must have been uncommonly strong not to have been extremely relaxed by such an intemperate use of it. He assured me that he never felt the least inconvenience from it; which is a proof that the fault of his constitution was rather a too great tension of fibres than the contrary. Mr. Hanway wrote an angry answer to Johnson's review of his *Essay on Tea* (1756); and Johnson, after a full and deliberate pause, made a reply to it: the only instance, I believe, in the whole course of his life, when he condescended to oppose anything that was written against him."—M.

earthly pencil. Pass, then, my good painter, to something more within its power; and the next article brought forward should naturally be myself—a picture of the Opium-eater, with his "little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug" lying beside him on the table. As to the opium, I have no objection to see a picture of *that;* you may paint it, if you choose; but I apprise you that no "little" receptacle would, even in 1816, answer *my* purpose, who was at a distance from the "stately Pantheon" and all druggists (mortal or otherwise). No: you may as well paint the real receptacle, which was not of gold, but of glass, and as much like a sublunary wine-decanter as possible. In fact, one day, by a series of happily-conceived experiments, I discovered that it *was* a decanter. Into this you may put a quart of ruby-coloured laudanum; that, and a book of German metaphysics placed by its side, will sufficiently attest my being in the neighbourhood; but, as to myself, there I demur. I admit that, naturally, I ought to occupy the foreground of the picture; that, being the hero of the piece, or (if you choose) the criminal at the bar, my body should be had into court. This seems reasonable; but why should I confess on this point to a painter? or why confess it at all? If the public (into whose private ear I am confidentially whispering my Confessions, and not into any painter's) should chance to have framed some agreeable picture for itself of the Opium-eater's exterior—should have ascribed to him, romantically, an elegant person or a handsome face—why should I barbarously tear from it so pleasing a delusion?—pleasing both to the public and to me. No: paint me, if at all, according to your own fancy; and, since a painter's fancy should teem with beautiful creations, I cannot fail, in that way, to be a gainer.

And now, reader, we have run through all the ten categories of my condition, as it stood about 1816-17, up to the middle of which latter year I judge myself to have been a happy man; and the elements of that happiness I have endeavoured to place before you, in the above sketch of the interior of a scholar's library, in a cottage among the mountains, on a stormy winter evening, rain driving vindictively and with malice aforethought against the windows,

and darkness such that you cannot see your own hand when held up against the sky.

But now farewell, a long farewell, to happiness, winter or summer! farewell to smiles and laughter! farewell to peace of mind, to tranquil dreams, and to the blessed consolations of sleep! For more than three years and a-half I am summoned away from these. Here opens upon me an Iliad of woes: for I now enter upon

PART III

THE PAINS OF OPIUM

> "As when some great painter dips
> His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse."
> SHELLEY'S *Revolt of Islam*.

READER, who have thus far accompanied me, I must request your attention, before we go farther, to a few explanatory notes.

I. You are already aware, I hope—else you must have a low opinion of my logic—that the opium miseries, which are now on the point of pressing forward to the front of this narrative, connect themselves with my early hardships in London (and therefore more remotely with those in Wales) by natural links of affiliation—that is, the early series of sufferings was the parent of the later. Otherwise, these Confessions would break up into two disconnected sections: first, a record of boyish calamities; secondly, a record (totally independent) of sufferings consequent upon excesses in opium. And the two sections would have no link whatever to connect them, except the slight one of having both happened to the same person. But a little attention will show the strictness of the inter-connexion. The boyish sufferings, whether in Wales or London, pressing upon an organ peculiarly weak in my bodily system—viz. the stomach—caused that subsequent distress and irritability of the stomach which drove me to the use of opium as the sole remedy potent enough to control it. Here already there is exposed a sufficient *causal* connexion between the two several

sections of my experience. The opium would probably never have been promoted into the dignity of a daily and a life-long resource, had it not proved itself to be the one sole agent equal to the task of tranquillising the miseries left behind by the youthful privations. Thus far the *nexus*, as between cause and effect, is sufficiently established between the one experience and the other—between the boyish records and the records of mature life. There needed no other *nexus* to justify the unity of the entire Confessions. But, though not wanted, nevertheless it happens that there *is* another and a distinct link connecting the two separate records. The main phenomenon by which opium expressed itself permanently, and the sole phenomenon that was communicable, lay in the dreams (and in the peculiar dream-scenery) which followed the opium excesses. But naturally these dreams, and this dream-scenery, drew their outlines and materials—their great lights and shadows—from those profound revelations which had been ploughed so deeply into the heart, from those *encaustic* records which in the mighty furnaces of London life had been burned into the undying memory by the fierce action of misery. And thus in reality the early experiences of erring childhood not only led to the secondary experiences of opium, but also determined the particular form and pressure of the chief phenomena in those secondary experiences. Here is the briefest possible abstract of the total case :—The final object of the whole record lay in the dreams. For the sake of those the entire narrative arose. But what caused the dreams? Opium used in unexampled excess. But what caused this excess in the use of opium? Simply the early sufferings ; these, and these only, through the derangements which they left behind in the animal economy. On this mode of viewing the case, moving regressively from the end to the beginning, it will be seen that there is one uninterrupted bond of unity running through the entire succession of experiences, first and last : the dreams were an inheritance from the opium ; the opium was an inheritance from the boyish follies.

II. You will think, perhaps, that I am too confidential and communicative of my own private history. It may be so. But my way of writing is rather to think aloud, and

follow my own humours, than much to inquire who is listening to me; for, if once I stop to consider what is proper to be said, I shall soon come to doubt whether any part at all is proper. The fact is, I imagine myself writing at a distance of twenty—thirty—fifty years ahead of this present moment, either for the satisfaction of the few who may then retain any interest in myself, or of the many (a number that is sure to be continually growing) who will take an inextinguishable interest in the mysterious powers of opium. For opium *is* mysterious; mysterious to the extent, at times, of apparent self-contradiction; and *so* mysterious that my own long experience in its use—sometimes even in its abuse—did but mislead me into conclusions ever more and more remote from what I now suppose to be the truth. Fifty-and-two years' experience of opium, as a magical resource under *all* modes of bodily suffering, I may now claim to have had—allowing only for some periods of four or six months, during which, by unexampled efforts of self-conquest, I had accomplished a determined abstinence from opium.[1] These parentheses being subtracted, as also, and secondly, some off-and-on fits of tentative and intermitting dalliance with opium in the opening of my career—these deductions allowed for, I may describe myself as experimentally acquainted with opium for something more than half-a-century. What, then, is my final report upon its

[1] With what final result I have much difficulty in saying. Invariably, after such victories, I returned, upon deliberate choice (after weighing all the consequences on this side and on that), to the daily use of opium, but with silent changes, many and great (worked apparently by these reiterated struggles), in the opium-eating habits. Amongst other changes was this, that the quantity required gradually fell by an enormous proportion. According to the modern slang phrase, I had in the meridian stage of my opium career used "*fabulous*" quantities. Stating the quantities—not in solid opium, but in the tincture (known to everybody as *laudanum*)—my daily ration was eight thousand drops. If you write down that amount in the ordinary way as 8000, you see at a glance that you may read it into eight quantities of a thousand, or into eight hundred quantities of ten, or lastly, into eighty quantities of one hundred. Now, a single quantity of one hundred will about fill a very old-fashioned obsolete tea-spoon, of that order which you find still lingering amongst the respectable poor. Eighty such quantities, therefore, would have filled eighty of such antediluvian spoons—that is, it would have been the common

good and evil results? In particular, upon these two capital tendencies of habitual opium-eating under the popular misconceptions: viz. its supposed necessity of continually clamouring for increasing quantities; secondly, its supposed corresponding declension in power and efficacy. Upon these ugly scandals what is my most deliberate award? At the age of forty, the reader is aware that, under our ancestral proverb, every man is a fool or a physician. Apparently our excellent ancestors, aiming undeniably at alliteration, spelled *physician* with an *f*. And why not? A man's physic might be undeniable, although his spelling should be open to some slight improvements. But I presume that the proverb meant to exact from any man only so much medical skill as should undertake the responsibility of his own individual health. It is my duty, it seems, thus far to be a physician —to guarantee, so far as human foresight *can* guarantee, my own corporeal sanity. And this, trying the case by ordinary practical tests, I have accomplished. And I add solemnly that without opium most certainly I could not have accomplished such a result. Thirty-five years ago, beyond all doubt, I should have been in my grave. And, as to the two popular dilemmas: that either you must renounce opium, or else indefinitely augment the daily ration; and, secondly, that, even submitting to such a postulate, you must content yourself, under any scale of doses, with an effect continually decaying,—in fact, that you must ultimately descend into the

hospital dose for three hundred and twenty adult patients. But the ordinary tea-spoon of this present nineteenth century is nearly as capacious as the dessert-spoon of our ancestors. Which I have heard accounted for thus:—Throughout the eighteenth century, when first tea became known to the working population, the tea-drinkers were almost exclusively women; men, even in educated classes, very often persisting (down to the French Revolution) in treating such a beverage as an idle and effeminate indulgence. This obstinate twist in masculine habits it was that secretly controlled the manufacture of tea-spoons. Up to Waterloo, tea-spoons were adjusted chiefly to the calibre of female mouths. Since then, greatly to the benefit of the national health, the grosser and browner sex have universally fallen into the effeminate habit of tea-drinking; and the capacity of tea-spoons has naturally conformed to the new order of cormorant mouths that have alighted by myriads upon the tea-trays of these later generations.

despairing condition of the martyr to dram-drinking:—at this point I make a resolute stand, in blank denial of the whole doctrine. Originally, when first entering upon my opium career, I did so with great anxiety: and before my eyes floated for ever the analogies—dim, or *not* dim, according to my spirits at the moment—of the poor, perishing brandy-drinker, often on the brink of *delirium tremens!* Opium I pursued under a harsh necessity, as an unknown, shadowy power, leading I knew not whither, and a power that might suddenly change countenance upon this unknown road. Habitually I lived under such an impression of awe as we have all felt from stories of fawns, or seeming fawns, that have run before some mounted hunter for many a league, until they have tempted him far into the mazes of a boundless forest, and at that point, where all regress had become lost and impossible, either suddenly vanished, leaving the man utterly bewildered, or assumed some more fearful shape. A part of the evil which I feared actually unfolded itself; but all was due to my own ignorance, to neglect of cautionary measures, or to gross mismanagement of my health in points where I well knew the risks, but grievously underrated their urgency and pressure. I was temperate: that solitary advantage I had; but I sank under the lulling seductions of opium into total sedentariness, and *that* whilst holding firmly the belief that powerful exercise was omnipotent against all modes of debility or obscure nervous irritations. The account of my depression, and almost of my helplessness, in the next memorandum (No. III), is faithful as a description to the real case. But, in ascribing that case to opium, as any transcendent and overmastering agency, I was thoroughly wrong. Twenty days of exercise, twenty times twenty miles of walking, at the ordinary pace of three and a-half miles an hour, or perhaps half that amount, would have sent me up as buoyantly as a balloon into regions of natural and healthy excitement, where dejection is an impossible phenomenon. O heavens! how man abuses or neglects his natural resources! Yes, the thoughtful reader is disposed to say; but very possibly distinguishing between such *natural* resources and opium as a resource that is *not* natural, but highly artificial, or even absolutely

unnatural. I think otherwise. Upon the basis of my really vast, perhaps unequalled, experience (let me add of my *tentative* experience, varying its trials in every conceivable mode so as to meet the question at issue under every angle), I advance these three following propositions, all of them unsuspected by the popular mind, and the last of them (as cannot much longer fail to be discovered) bearing a national value—I mean, as meeting our English hereditary complaint :—

1. With respect to the morbid growth upon the opium-eater of his peculiar habit, when once rooted in the system, and throwing out *tentacula* like a cancer, it is out of my power to deliver any such oracular judgment upon the case —*i.e.* upon the apparent danger of such a course, and by what stages it might be expected to travel towards its final consummation—as naturally I should wish to do. Being an oracle, it is my wish to behave myself like an oracle, and not to evade any decent man's questions in the way that Apollo too often did at Delphi. But, in this particular instance before me, the accident of my own individual seamanship in presence of this storm interfered with the natural evolution of the problem in its extreme form of danger. I had become too uneasy under the consciousness of that intensely artificial condition into which I had imperceptibly lapsed through unprecedented quantities of opium ; the shadows of eclipse were too dark and lurid not to rouse and alarm me into a spasmodic effort for reconquering the ground which I had lost. Such an effort I made : every step by which I had gone astray did I patiently unthread. And thus I fought off the natural and spontaneous catastrophe, whatever *that* might be, which mighty Nature would else have let loose for redressing the wrongs offered to herself. But what followed ? In six or eight months more, upon fresh movements arising of insupportable nervous irritation, I fleeted back into the same opium lull. To and fro, up and down, did I tilt upon those mountainous seas, for year after year. "See-saw,[1] like Margery Daw, that

[1] "*See-saw*," &c. :—O dear reader, surely you don't want an oracle to tell you that this is a good old nursery lyric, which through four centuries has stood the criticism, stood the anger against Daw's

sold her bed and lay on straw." Even so did I, led astray, perhaps, by the classical example of Miss Daw, see-saw for year after year, out and in, of manœuvres the most intricate, dances the most elaborate, receding or approaching, round my great central sun of opium. Sometimes I ran perilously close into my perihelion; sometimes I became frightened, and wheeled off into a vast cometary aphelion, where for six months "opium" was a word unknown. How nature stood all these see-sawings is quite a mystery to me: I must have led her a sad life in those days. Nervous irritation forced me, at times, upon frightful excesses; but terror from anomalous symptoms sooner or later forced me back. This terror was strengthened by the vague hypotheses current at that period about spontaneous combustion. Might I not myself take leave of the literary world in that fashion? According to the popular fancy, there were two modes of this spontaneity, and really very little to choose between them. Upon one variety of this explosion, a man blew up in the dark, without match or candle near him, leaving nothing behind him but some bones, of no use to anybody, and which were supposed to be *his* only because nobody else ever applied for them. It was fancied that some volcanic agency — an unknown deposition — accumulated from some vast redundancy of brandy, furnished the self-exploding principle. But this startled the faith of most people; and a more plausible scheme suggested itself, which depended upon the concurrence of a lucifer-match. Without an incendiary, a man could not take fire. We sometimes see the hands of inveterate dram-drinkers throw off an atmosphere of intoxicating vapours, strong enough to lay flies into a state of sleep or *coma;* and on the same principle it was supposed that the breath might be so loaded with spirituous particles as to catch fire from a match applied to a pipe when held between the lips. If so, then what should hinder the "devouring element" (as newspapers call fire) from spreading through the throat to the cavity of the chest? in which case, not being insured, the man would naturally become a total loss.

enemies, stood the pity for Daw herself, so infamously reduced to straw, of children through eighty generations, reckoning five years to each nursery succession.

Opium, however, it will occur to the reader, is not alcohol. That is true. But it might, for anything that was known experimentally, be ultimately worse. Coleridge, the only person known to the public as having dallied systematically and for many years with opium, could not be looked to for any candid report of its history and progress; besides that, Coleridge was under a permanent craze of having nearly accomplished his own liberation from opium; and thus he had come to have an *extra* reason for self-delusion. Finding myself, therefore, walking on a solitary path of bad repute, leading *whither* no man's experience could tell me, I became proportionably cautious; and, if nature had any plot for making an example of me, I was resolved to baulk her. Thus it was that I never followed out the seductions of opium to their final extremity. But, nevertheless, in evading that extremity, I stumbled upon as great a discovery as if I had *not* evaded it. After the first or second self-conquest in this conflict — although finding it impossible to persist through more than a few months in the abstinence from opium—I remarked, however, that the domineering tyranny of its exactions was at length steadily declining. Quantities noticeably less had now become sufficient: and, after the fourth of these victories, won with continually decreasing efforts, I found that not only had the daily dose (upon relapsing) suffered a self-limitation to an enormous extent, but also that, upon any attempt obstinately to renew the old doses, there arose a new symptom — viz. an irritation on the surface of the skin—which soon became insupportable, and tended to distraction. In about four years, without any further efforts, my daily ration had fallen *spontaneously* from a varying quantity of eight, ten, or twelve thousand drops of laudanum to about three hundred. I describe the drug as *laudanum*, because another change ran along collaterally with this supreme change—viz. that the solid opium began to require a length of time, continually increasing, to expand its effects sensibly, oftentimes not less than four hours; whereas the tincture manifested its presence instantaneously.

Thus, then, I had reached a position from which authoritatively it might be pronounced, as a result of long, anxious, and vigilant experience, that, on the assumption of earnest

(even though intermitting) efforts towards recurrent abstinences on the part of the opium-eater, the practice of indulging to the very greatest excess in this narcotic tends to a natural (almost an inevitable) euthanasy. Many years ago, when briefly touching on this subject, I announced (as a fact even *then* made known to me) that no instance of abstinence, though it were but of three days' continuance, ever perishes. Ten grains, deducted from a daily ration of five hundred, will tell through a series of many weeks, and will be found again modifying the final result, even at the close of the year's reckoning. At this day, after a half-century of oscillating experience, and after no efforts or trying acts of self-denial beyond those severe ones attached to the several processes (five or six in all) of re-conquering my freedom from the yoke of opium, I find myself pretty nearly at the same station which I occupied at that vast distance of time. It is recorded of Lord Nelson that, even after the Nile and Copenhagen, he still paid the penalty, on the first days of resuming his naval life, which is generally exacted by nature from the youngest little middy or the rawest griffin—viz. sea-sickness. And this happens to a considerable proportion of sailors: they do not recover their sea-legs till some days after getting afloat. The very same thing happens to veteran opium-eaters, when first, after long intermissions, resuming too abruptly their ancient familiarities with opium. It is a fact, which I mention as indicating the enormous revolutions passed through, that, within these five years, I have turned pale, and felt warnings, pointing towards such an uneasiness, after taking not more than twenty grains of opium. At present, and for some years, I have been habitually content with five or six grains daily, instead of three hundred and twenty to four hundred grains. Let me wind up this retrospect with saying that the powers of opium, as an anodyne, but still more as a tranquilliser of nervous and anomalous sensations, have not in the smallest degree decayed, and that, if it has casually unveiled its early power of exacting slight penalties from any trivial inattention to accurate proportions, it has more than commensurately renewed its ancient privilege of lulling irritation and of supporting preternatural calls for exertion.

My first proposition, therefore, amounts to this—that the process of weaning one's-self from the deep bondage of opium, by many people viewed with despairing eyes, is not only a possible achievement, and one which grows easier in every stage of its progress, but is favoured and promoted by nature in secret ways that could not, without some experience, have been suspected. This, however, is but a sorry commendation of any resource making great pretensions, that, by a process confessedly trying to human firmness, it can ultimately be thrown aside. Certainly little would be gained by the negative service of cancelling a drawback upon any agency whatever, until it were shown that this drawback has availed to disturb and neutralise great positive blessings lying within the gift of that agency. What are the advantages connected with opium that can merit any such name as blessings?

2. Briefly let me say, in the *second* proposition, that, if the reader had, in any South American forest, seen growing rankly some great febrifuge (such as the Jesuits' bark), he would probably have noticed it with slight regard. To understand its value, he must first have suffered from intermittent fever. Bark might strike him as an unnatural stimulant; but, when he came to see that tertian or quartan fever was also an unnatural pressure upon human energies, he would begin to guess that two counter unnaturals may terminate in one most natural and salubrious result. Nervous irritation is the secret desolator of human life; and for this there is probably no adequate controlling power but that of opium, taken daily, under steady regulation.

3. But even more momentous is the burden of my *third* proposition. Are you aware, reader, what it is that constitutes the scourge (physically speaking) of Great Britain and Ireland? All readers who direct any part of their attention to medical subjects must know that it is pulmonary consumption. If you walk through a forest at certain seasons, you will see what is called a *blaze* of white paint upon a certain *élite* of the trees marked out by the forester as ripe for the axe. Such a blaze, if the shadowy world could reveal its futurities, would be seen everywhere distributing its secret

badges of cognisance amongst our youthful men and women. Of those that, in the expression of Pericles, constitute the vernal section of our population, what a multitudinous crowd would be seen to wear upon their foreheads the same sad ghastly blaze, or some equivalent symbol of dedication to an early grave. How appalling in its amount is this annual slaughter amongst those that should by birthright be specially the children of hope, and levied impartially from *every* rank of society! Is the income-tax or the poor-rate, faithful as each is to its regulating tide-tables, paid by *any* class with as much punctuality as this premature *florilegium*, this gathering and rendering up of blighted blossoms, by *all* classes? Then comes the startling question—that pierces the breaking hearts of so many thousand afflicted relatives—Is there no remedy? Is there no palliation of the evil? Waste not a thought upon the idle question whether he that speaks is armed with this form or that form of authorisation and sanction! Think within yourself how infinite would be the scorn of any poor sorrow-stricken mother, if she—standing over the coffin of her daughter—could believe or could imagine that any vestige of ceremonial scruples, or of fool-born superstitions, or the terror of a word, or old traditional prejudice, had been allowed to neutralise one chance in a thousand for her daughter—had by possibility (but, as I could tell her, had sometimes to a certainty) stepped between patients and deliverance from the grave, sure and perfect! "What matter," she would cry out, indignantly, "who it is that says the thing, so long as the thing itself is true?" It is the potent and faithful *word* that is wanted, in perfect slight of the organ through which it is uttered. Let me premise this notorious fact, that all consumption, though latent in the constitution, and indicated often to the eye in bodily conformation, does not therefore manifest itself as a disease, until some form of "cold," or bronchitis, some familiar affection of the chest or of the lungs, arises to furnish a starting-point for the morbid development.[1] Now the one fatal blunder lies in

[1] Here is a parallel case, equally fatal where it occurs, but happily moving within a far narrower circle. About fifty years ago, Sir Everard Home, a surgeon of the highest class, mentioned as a dreadful caution that, within his own experience, many an indolent tumour in the face,

suffering that development to occur; and the one counter-working secret for pre-arrestment of this evil lies in steadily, by whatever means, keeping up and promoting the insensible perspiration. In that one simple art of controlling a constant function of the animal economy lies a magician's talisman for defeating the forces leagued against the great organs of respiration. Pulmonary affections, if not *previously* suffered to develop themselves, cannot live under the hourly counter-working of this magical force. Consequently, the one question in arrear is, what potent drug is that which possesses this power, a power like that of "Amram's son," for evoking salubrious streams, welling forth benignly from systems else parched and arid as rocks in the wilderness? There is none that I know of answering the need but opium. The powers of that great agent I first learned dimly to guess at from a remark made to me by a lady in London: then, and for some time previously, she had been hospitably entertaining Coleridge, whom, indeed, she tended with the anxiety of a daughter. Consequently, she was familiarly acquainted with his opium habits; and, on my asking, in reply to some remark of hers, how she could be so sure as her words implied that Coleridge was just then likely to be incapacitated for writing (or, indeed, for any literary *exertion*), she said, "Oh, I know it well by the glistening of his cheeks." Coleridge's face, as is well known to his acquaintances, exposed a large surface of cheek; too large for the intellectual expression of his features generally, had not the final effect been redeemed by what Wordsworth styled his "godlike forehead."[1] The result was that no possible face so broadly

not unfrequently the most trifling pimple, which for thirty or more years had caused no uneasiness whatever, suddenly might chance to receive the slightest possible wound from a razor in the act of shaving. What followed? Once disturbed, the trivial excrescence became an open cancer. Is the parallel catastrophe in the pulmonary system, when pushed forward into development, at all less likely to hide its importance from uninstructed eyes? Yet, on the other hand, it is a thousand times more likely to happen.

[1] Wordsworth's famous description of Coleridge occurs in *Stanzas written in my pocket-copy of Thomson's Castle of Indolence* (1802), and runs thus:—

"A noticeable man with large gray eyes,
And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly

betrayed and published any effects whatever, especially these lustrous effects from excesses in opium. For some years I failed to consider reflectively, or else, reflecting, I failed to decipher, this resplendent acreage of cheek. But at last, either *proprio marte*, or prompted by some medical hint, I came to understand that the glistening face, glorious from afar like the old Pagan face of the demigod Æsculapius, simply reported the gathering accumulations of insensible perspiration. In the very hour, a memorable hour, of making that discovery, I made another. My own history, medically speaking, involved a mystery. At the commencement of my opium career, I had myself been pronounced repeatedly a martyr elect to pulmonary consumption. And, although, in the common decencies of humanity, this opinion upon my prospects had always been accompanied with some formal words of encouragement — as, for instance, that constitutions, after all, varied by endless differences — that nobody could fix limits to the powers of medicine, or, in default of medicine, to the healing resources of nature herself — yet, without something like a miracle in my favour, I was instructed to regard myself as a condemned subject. That was the upshot of these agreeable communications; alarming enough; and they were rendered more so by these three facts:—First, the opinions were pronounced by the highest authorities in Christendom—viz. the physicians at Clifton and the Bristol Hotwells, who saw more of pulmonary disorders in one twelvemonth than the rest of the profession through all Europe in a century; for the disease, it must be remembered, was almost peculiar as a national scourge to Britain, interlinked with the local accidents of the climate and its restless changes; so that only in England could it be studied, and even there only in perfection at these Bristolian adjacencies — the reason being that all opulent patients resorted to the Devonshire watering-places, where the balmy temperature of the air and prevailing winds allowed the myrtle and other greenhouse shrubs to stand out-of-doors all

As if a blooming face it ought to be;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
Deprest by weight of musing phantasy;
Profound his forehead was."—M.

winter through, and naturally on the road to Devonshire all patients alike touched at Clifton. There I was myself continually resident. Many, therefore, and of supreme authority, were the prophets of evil that announced to me my doom. Secondly, they were countenanced by the ugly fact that I out of eight children was the one who most closely inherited the bodily conformation of a father who had died of consumption at the early age of thirty-nine.[1] Thirdly, I offered at the first glance, to a medical eye, every symptom of *phthisis* broadly and conspicuously developed. The hectic colours on the face, the nocturnal perspirations, the growing embarrassment of the respiration, and other expressions of gathering feebleness under any attempts at taking exercise—all these symptoms were steadily accumulating between the age of twenty-two and twenty-four. What was it that first arrested them? Simply the use, continually becoming more regular, of opium. Nobody recommended this drug to me; on the contrary, under that ignorant horror which everywhere invested opium, I saw too clearly that any avowed use of it would expose me to a rabid persecution.[2] Under the sincere and unaffected hope of saving me from destruction, I should have been hunted into the grave within six months. I kept my own counsel; said nothing; awakened no suspicions; persevered more and more determinately in the use of opium; and finally effected so absolute a conquest over all pulmonary symptoms as could not have failed to fix upon me the astonishment of Clifton, had not the sense of wonder been broken by the lingering time consumed in the several stages of the malady, and still more effectually by my

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 30, footnote.—M.

[2] "*Rabid persecution*":—I do not mean that, in the circumstances of my individual position, any opening could have arisen to an opposition more than verbal; since it would have been easy for me at all times to withdraw myself by hundreds of leagues from controversies upon the case. But the reasons for concealment were not the less urgent. For it would have been painful to find myself reduced to the dilemma of either practising habitual and complex dissimulation, or, on the other hand, of throwing myself headlong into that fiery vortex of hotheaded ignorance upon the very name of opium which to this hour (though with less of rancorous bigotry) makes it hazardous to avow any daily use of so potent a drug.

own personal withdrawal from Clifton and its neighbourhoods.

Finally arose what will inevitably turn out a more decisive chapter in such a record. I had always fixed my eyes and my expectations upon a revolution in the social history of opium which could not (as I assured myself) by accident or by art be materially deferred. The great social machinery of life-insurance, supposing no other agency to be brought into play, how would *that* affect the great medicinal interests of opium? I knew that insurance offices, and the ablest actuaries of such offices, were not less ignorant upon the real merits of the opium question, and (which was worse) not less profoundly *prejudiced*, or less fanatical in their prejudices, than the rest of society. But, then, there were interests, growing continually, which would very soon force them into relaxing these prejudices. It would be alleged, at first, that opium-eating increased the risk of a life-insurance. Waiving the question whether it really *did* increase that risk, in any case that increase of risk, like other risks, could be valued, and *must* be valued. New habits were arising in society: that I well knew. And the old machineries for insuring life interests, under these or any other shifting conditions, would be obliged to adapt themselves to changing circumstances. If the old offices should be weak enough to persist in their misdirected obstinacy, new ones would arise. Meantime the history of this question moved through the following aspects:—Sixteen and seventeen years ago, the offices all looked with horror upon opium-eaters. Thus far, all men must have disapproved the principles of their policy. Habitual brandy-drinkers met with no repulse. And yet alcohol leads into daily dangers—for instance, that of *delirium tremens*. But no man ever heard of opium leading into *delirium tremens*. In the one case, there are well-ascertained and notorious dangers besetting the path; but, in the other, supposing any corresponding dangers to exist, they have yet to be discovered. However, the offices would not look at us who came forward avowing ourselves to be opium-eaters. Myself in particular they regarded, I believe, as the abomination of desolation. And fourteen offices in succession, within a few months, re-

pulsed me as a candidate for insurance on that solitary ground of having owned myself to be an opium-eater. The insurance was of very little consequence to myself, though involving some interest to others. And I contented myself with saying, "Ten years hence, gentlemen, you will have come to understand your own interests better." In less than *seven* years I received a letter from Mr. Tait, surgeon to the Police Force in Edinburgh, reporting a direct investigation officially pursued by him under private instructions received from two or more insurance offices. I knew, at the beginning of these seven years, or had strong reasons for believing, that the habit of opium-eating was spreading extensively, and through classes of society widely disconnected. This diffusion would, beyond a doubt, as one of its earliest consequences, coerce the insurance offices into a strict revision of their old blind policy. Accordingly it had already done so; and the earliest fruits of this revolution were now before me in the proof-sheets so obligingly transmitted by Mr. Tait. His object, as I understood it, in sending these proofs to myself, was simply to collect such additional notices, suggestions, or sceptical queries, as might reasonably be anticipated from any reflective opium experience so extensive as my own. Most unhappily, this gentleman, during the course of our brief correspondence, was suddenly attacked by typhus fever; and, after a short illness, to my own exceeding regret, he died. On all accounts I had reason for sorrow. Knowing him only through his very interesting correspondence with myself, I had learned to form high expectations from Mr. Tait's philosophic spirit and his determined hostility to traditional cant. He had recorded, in the communications made to myself, with great minuteness and anxiety for rigour of accuracy, the cases of more than ninety patients. And he had shown himself inexorably deaf to all attempts at confounding evils specially belonging to opium as a stimulant, as a narcotic, or as a poison, with those which belong to opium merely as a cause of constipation or other ordinary irregularities in the animal economy. Most people of sedentary habits, but amongst such people notoriously those who think much, need some slight means of stimulating the watchwork of the animal system into action. Neglect of such means

will of course derange the health. But in such derangements there is no special impeachment of opium: many thousands of agents terminate in the same or more obstinate derangements, unless vigilantly counteracted. The paramount mission of Mr. Tait, under his instructions from insurance offices, as I interpreted his own account of this mission, was to report firmly and decisively upon the tendencies of opium in relation to the lengthening or shortening of life. At that point where his proof-sheets were interrupted by the fatal attack of fever, he had not entirely finished his record of cases; so that his final judgment or summing up had not commenced. It was, however, evident to me in what channel this final judgment would have flowed. To a certainty, he would have authorised his clients (the insurance offices) to dismiss all anxiety as to the life-abridging tendencies of opium. But he would have pointed their jealousy in another direction—viz. this, that in some proportion of cases there may always be a reasonable ground for suspecting, not the opium as separately in itself any cause of mischief, but the opium as a conjectural indication of some secret distress or irritation that had fastened upon the system, and had in that way sought relief; cases, in short, which the use of opium had not caused, but which, on the contrary, had caused the use of opium—opium having been called in to redress or to relieve the affection. In all such circumstances, the insurance office is entitled to call for a frank disclosure of the ailment; but not, as hitherto, entitled to assume the opium as itself an ailment. It may very easily have happened that simply the genial restoration derived from opium, its power of qualifying a man suddenly to face (that is, upon an hour's warning to face) some twelve hours' unusual exertion,—qualifying him both as to spirits and as to strength; or again, simply the general purpose of seeking relief from ennui, or *tædium vitæ*—any one of these motives may satisfactorily account for the applicant's having resorted to opium. He might reply to the office in Professor Wilson's word,[1] "Gentlemen, I am a *Hedonist;* and, if you *must* know why I take opium, that's

[1] From the Greek word for *voluptuous pleasure* — viz. *Hedone* (Ἡδονή)—Professor Wilson coined the English word *Hedonist*, which he sometimes applied in playful reproach to myself and others.

the reason why." But still, upon every admission from a candidate that he took opium, it would be a prudent question and a just question on the part of the office, to ask "*why*," and in what circumstances the practice had originated. If in any local uneasiness, then would arise a natural right on the part of the office to press for a surgical examination. But, apart from such special cases, it was evident that this acute and experienced surgeon saw no reason whatever in the simple practice of opium-eating for hesitating upon a life-insurance proposal, or for exacting a higher rate of premium.

Here I pause. The reader will infer, from what I have now said, that all passages, written at an earlier period under cloudy and uncorrected views of the evil agencies presumable in opium, stand retracted; although, shrinking from the labour of altering an error diffused so widely under my own early misconceptions of the truth, I have suffered them to remain as they were. My general views upon the powers and natural tendencies of opium were all supported and strengthened by this fortunate advantage of a professional correspondence. My special doctrine I now repeat at this point of valediction, and in a rememberable form. Lord Bacon said once, too boldly and hazardously, that he who discovers the secret of making myrrh soluble by human blood has discovered the secret of immortal life. I propose a more modest form of magic—that he who discovers the secret of stimulating and keeping up unintermittingly the insensible perspiration has discovered the secret of intercepting pulmonary consumption. In my medical character, I here take leave of the reader, and fall back into the current of my regular narrative.

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III. My studies have now been long interrupted.[1] I cannot read to myself with any pleasure, hardly with a moment's endurance. Yet I sometimes read aloud for the pleasure of others; because reading is an accomplishment of mine, and, in the slang use of the word *accomplishment* as a

[1] Understand that the *tense* is here changed,—De Quincey reverting to himself as already described in his married life in his cottage at Grasmere from 1816 onwards. The connexion is, in fact, with the last paragraphs of Part II.—M.

superficial and ornamental attainment, almost the only one I possess ; and formerly, if I had any vanity at all connected with any endowment or attainment of mine, it was with this ; for I had observed that no accomplishment is more rare. Actors are the worst readers of all. John Kemble is not effective as a reader, though he has the great advantage of mature scholarship ; and his sister, the immortal Siddons, with all her superiority to him in voice, reads even less effectively. She reads nothing well but dramatic works. In the "Paradise Lost," which I heard her attempt at Barley Wood, her failure was distressing ; almost as distressing as the sycophantic applause of the surrounding company —all lost, of course, in nearly speechless admiration. (Yet I am sensible that this contemptuous feeling for the circle of admirers is scarcely justified. What *should* the poor creatures have done? Already, in the mere attempt to win their suffrages, in placing herself once again upon trial, there was a condescension on the part of Mrs. Siddons, after which free judgment became impossible. I felt a wish to address Mrs. Siddons thus—You that have read to royalty at Windsor, nay, have even been desired to *sit down* at Windsor whilst reading, ever afterwards are a privileged person, liable to no accent of truth. Our feelings, as not free to take any natural expression, can be of no value. Suffer us to be silent, if only for the dignity of human nature. And do you yourself be silent, if only for the dignity of that once unequalled voice.) Neither Coleridge nor Southey is a good reader of verse. Southey is admirable almost in all things, but not in this. Both he and Coleridge read as if crying, or at least wailing lugubriously. People in general either read poetry without any passion at all, or else overstep the modesty of nature. Of late, if I have felt moved by anything in books, it has been by the grand lamentations of "Samson Agonistes," or the great harmonies of the Satanic speeches in "Paradise Regained," when read aloud by myself. We are far from towns ; but a young lady sometimes comes and drinks tea with us ; at her request and M——'s, I now and then read Wordsworth's poems to them. (Wordsworth, by the bye, is the only poet I ever met who could read his own verses ; often, indeed, he reads admirably.)

For nearly two years I believe that I read nothing and studied nothing. Analytic studies are continuous studies, and not to be pursued by fits and starts, or fragmentary efforts. All these were become insupportable to me ; I shrank from them with a sense of powerless and infantine feebleness that gave me an anguish the greater from remembering the time when I grappled with them to my own hourly delight ; and for this further reason, because I had devoted the labour of my whole life, had dedicated my intellect, blossoms and fruits, to the slow and elaborate toil of constructing one single work, to which I had presumed to give the title of an unfinished work of Spinosa's—viz. "*De Emendatione Humani Intellectûs.*" This was now lying locked up as by frost, like any Spanish bridge or aqueduct begun upon too great a scale for the resources of the architect ; and, instead of surviving me, as a monument of wishes at least, and aspirations, and long labours, dedicated to the exaltation of human nature in that way in which God had best fitted me to promote so great an object, it was likely to stand a memorial to my children of hopes defeated, of baffled efforts, of materials uselessly accumulated, of foundations laid that were never to support a superstructure, of the grief and the ruin of the architect. In this state of imbecility, I had, for amusement, turned my attention to political economy. My understanding, which formerly had been as active and restless as a panther, could not, I suppose (so long as I lived at all), sink into utter lethargy ; and political economy offers this advantage to a person in my state,—that, though it is eminently an organic science (no part, that is to say, but what acts on the whole, as the whole again reacts on and through each part), yet still the several parts may be detached and contemplated singly. Great as was the prostration of my powers at this time, yet I could not forget my knowledge ; and my understanding had been for too many years intimate with severe thinkers, with logic, and the great masters of knowledge, not to be aware of a great call made by political economy at this crisis for a new law and a transcendent legislator. Suddenly, in 1818, a friend in Edinburgh sent me down Mr. Ricardo's book ; and, recurring to my own prophetic anticipation of some coming legislator for this science, I said, before I had finished the

first chapter, "Thou art the man!"[1] Wonder and curiosity were emotions that had long been dead in me. Yet I wondered once more—wondered at myself that could once again be stimulated to the effort of reading; and much more I wondered at the book. Had this profound work been really written during the tumultuous hurry of the nineteenth century? Could it be that an Englishman, and he not in academic bowers, but oppressed by mercantile and senatorial cares, had accomplished what all the universities of Europe, and a century of thought, had failed even to advance by one hair's-breadth? Previous writers had been crushed and overlaid by the enormous weights of facts, details, and exceptions; Mr. Ricardo had deduced, *a priori*, from the understanding itself, laws which first shot arrowy light into the dark chaos of materials, and had thus constructed what hitherto was but a collection of tentative discussions into a science of regular proportions, now first standing upon an eternal basis.

Thus did one simple work of a profound understanding avail to give me a pleasure and an activity which I had not known for years; it roused me even to write, or, at least, to dictate what M—— wrote for me. It seemed to me that some important truths had escaped even "the inevitable eye" of Mr. Ricardo; and, as these were, for the most part, of such a nature that I could express or illustrate them briefly and elegantly by algebraic symbols, the whole would hardly have reached the bulk of a pamphlet. With M—— for my amanuensis, even at this time, incapable as I was of all general exertion, I drew up, therefore, my "Prolegomena to all Future Systems of Political Economy."

This exertion, however, was but a momentary flash, as the sequel showed. Arrangements were made at a provincial press, about eighteen miles distant, for printing it. An additional compositor was retained for some days on this account. The work was even twice advertised; and I was, in a manner, pledged to the fulfilment of my intention.

[1] David Ricardo (1772-1823). Already known by several pamphlets; he published in 1817 his *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation;* which is the work meant by De Quincey. He entered Parliament in 1818, and was very influential there.—M.

But I had a preface to write, and a dedication, which I wished to make impressive, to Mr. Ricardo. I found myself quite unable to accomplish all this. The arrangements were countermanded, the compositor dismissed, and my "Prolegomena" rested peacefully by the side of its elder and more dignified brother.

In thus describing and illustrating my intellectual torpor, I use terms that apply, more or less, to every part of the years during which I was under the Circean spells of opium. But for misery and suffering, I might, indeed, be said to have existed in a dormant state. I seldom could prevail on myself to write a letter; an answer of a few words to any that I received, was the utmost that I could accomplish; and often *that* not until the letter had lain for weeks, or even months, on my writing-table. Without the aid of M——, my whole domestic economy, whatever became of political economy, must have gone into irretrievable confusion. I shall not afterwards allude to this part of the case; it is one, however, which the opium-eater will find, in the end, most oppressive and tormenting, from the sense of incapacity and feebleness, from the direct embarrassments incident to the neglect or procrastination of each day's appropriate labours, and from the remorse which must often exasperate the stings of these evils to a conscientious mind. The opium-eater loses none of his moral sensibilities or aspirations; he wishes and longs as earnestly as ever to realise what he believes possible, and feels to be exacted by duty; but his intellectual apprehension of what is possible infinitely outruns his power, not of execution only, but even of proposing or willing. He lies under a world's weight of incubus and nightmare; he lies in sight of all that he would fain perform, just as a man forcibly confined to his bed by the mortal languor of paralysis, who is compelled to witness injury or outrage offered to some object of his tenderest love;—he would lay down his life if he might but rise and walk; but he is powerless as an infant, and cannot so much as make an effort to move.

But from this I now pass to what is the main subject of these latter Confessions—to the history and journal of what took place in my dreams; for these were the immediate and

proximate cause of shadowy terrors that settled and brooded over my whole waking life.

The first notice I had of any important change going on in this part of my physical economy was from the re-awaking of a state of eye oftentimes incident to childhood. I know not whether my reader is aware that many children have a power of painting, as it were, upon the darkness all sorts of phantoms: in some that power is simply a mechanic affection of the eye; others have a voluntary or semi-voluntary power to dismiss or summon such phantoms; or, as a child once said to me, when I questioned him on this matter, "I can tell them to go, and they go; but sometimes they come when I don't tell them to come." He had by one-half as unlimited a command over apparitions as a Roman centurion over his soldiers. In the middle of 1817 this faculty became increasingly distressing to me: at night, when I lay awake in bed, vast processions moved along continually in mournful pomp; friezes of never-ending stories, that to my feelings were as sad and solemn as stories drawn from times before Œdipus or Priam, before Tyre, before Memphis. And, concurrently with this, a corresponding change took place in my dreams; a theatre seemed suddenly opened and lighted up within my brain, which presented nightly spectacles of more than earthly splendour. And the four following facts may be mentioned, as noticeable at this time:—

1. That, as the creative state of the eye increased, a sympathy seemed to arise between the waking and the dreaming states of the brain in one point—that whatsoever I happened to call up and to trace by a voluntary act upon the darkness was very apt to transfer itself to my dreams; and at length I feared to exercise this faculty; for, as Midas turned all things to gold that yet baffled his hopes and defrauded his human desires, so whatsoever things capable of being visually represented I did but think of in the darkness immediately shaped themselves into phantoms for the eye; and, by a process apparently no less inevitable, when thus once traced in faint and visionary colours, like writings in sympathetic ink, they were drawn out, by the fierce chemistry of my dreams, into insufferable splendour that fretted my heart.

2. This and all other changes in my dreams were accompanied by deep-seated anxiety and funereal melancholy, such as are wholly incommunicable by words. I seemed every night to descend—not metaphorically, but literally to descend — into chasms and sunless abysses, depths below depths, from which it seemed hopeless that I could ever re-ascend. Nor did I, by waking, feel that I *had* re-ascended. Why should I dwell upon this? For indeed the state of gloom which attended these gorgeous spectacles, amounting at last to utter darkness, as of some suicidal despondency, cannot be approached by words.

3. The sense of space, and in the end the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, &c., were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled, and was amplified to an extent of unutterable and self-repeating infinity. This disturbed me very much less than the vast expansion of time. Sometimes I seemed to have lived for seventy or a hundred years in one night; nay, sometimes had feelings representative of a duration far beyond the limits of any human experience.

4. The minutest incidents of childhood, or forgotten scenes of later years, were often revived. I could not be said to recollect them; for, if I had been told of them when waking, I should not have been able to acknowledge them as parts of my past experience. But, placed as they were before me in dreams like intuitions, and clothed in all their evanescent circumstances and accompanying feelings, I *recognised* them instantaneously. I was once told by a near relative of mine that, having in her childhood fallen into a river, and being on the very verge of death but for the assistance which reached her at the last critical moment, she saw in a moment her whole life, clothed in its forgotten incidents, arrayed before her as in a mirror, not successively, but simultaneously; and she had a faculty developed as suddenly for comprehending the whole and every part.[1]

[1] The heroine of this remarkable case was a girl about nine years old; and there can be little doubt that she looked down as far within the *crater* of death—that awful volcano—as any human being ever *can* have done that has lived to draw back and to report her experience.

This, from some opium experiences, I can believe ; I have, indeed, seen the same thing asserted twice in modern books, and accompanied by a remark which probably is true—viz. that the dread book of account which the Scriptures speak of is, in fact, the mind itself of each individual. Of this,

Not less than ninety years did she survive this memorable escape ; and I may describe her as in all respects a woman of remarkable and interesting qualities. She enjoyed throughout her long life, as the reader will readily infer, serene and cloudless health ; had a masculine understanding ; reverenced truth not less than did the Evangelists ; and led a life of saintly devotion, such as might have glorified "*Hilarion or Paul.*"—(The words in italic are Ariosto's.)—I mention these traits as characterising her in a memorable extent, that the reader may not suppose himself relying upon a dealer in exaggerations, upon a credulous enthusiast, or upon a careless wielder of language. Forty-five years had intervened between the first time and the last time of her telling me this anecdote, and not one iota had shifted its ground amongst the incidents, nor had any the most trivial of the circumstantiations suffered change. The scene of the accident was the least of valleys,—what the Greeks of old would have called an ἄγκος, and we English should properly call a dell. Human tenant it had none : even at noonday it was a solitude, and would oftentimes have been a silent solitude, but for the brawling of a brook—not broad, but occasionally deep—which ran along the base of the little hills. Into this brook, probably into one of its dangerous pools, the child fell : and, according to the ordinary chances, she could have had but a slender prospect indeed of any deliverance ; for, although a dwelling-house was close by, it was shut out from view by the undulations of the ground. How long the child lay in the water was probably never inquired earnestly until the answer had become irrecoverable : for a servant, to whose care the child was then confided, had a natural interest in suppressing the whole case. From the child's own account, it should seem that *asphyxia* must have announced its commencement. A process of struggle and deadly suffocation was passed through half consciously. This process terminated by a sudden blow apparently *on* or *in* the brain, after which there was no pain or conflict ; but in an instant succeeded a dazzling rush of light ; immediately after which came the solemn apocalypse of the entire past life. Meantime, the child's disappearance in the water had happily been witnessed by a farmer who rented some fields in this little solitude, and by a rare accident was riding through them at the moment. Not being very well mounted, he was retarded by the hedges and other fences in making his way down to the water ; some time was thus lost ; but, once at the spot, he leaped in, booted and spurred, and succeeded in delivering one that must have been as nearly counted amongst the populations of the grave as perhaps the laws of the shadowy world can suffer to return !

at least, I feel assured, that there is no such thing as ultimate *forgetting;* traces once impressed upon the memory are indestructible; a thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind. Accidents of the same sort will also rend away this veil. But alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains for ever; just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day, whereas, in fact, we all know that it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil, and that they are waiting to be revealed whenever the obscuring daylight itself shall have withdrawn.

Having noticed these four facts as memorably distinguishing my dreams from those of health, I shall now cite a few illustrative cases; and shall then cite such others as I remember, in any order that may give them most effect as pictures to the reader.

I had been in youth, and ever since, for occasional amusement, a great reader of Livy, whom I confess that I prefer, both for style and matter, to any other of the Roman historians; and I had often felt as solemn and appalling sounds, emphatically representative of Roman majesty, the two words so often occurring in Livy, *Consul Romanus;* especially when the consul is introduced in his military character. I mean to say that the words *king, sultan, regent,* &c., or any other titles of those who embody in their own persons the collective majesty of a great people, had less power over my reverential feelings. I had also, though no great reader of History, made myself critically familiar with one period of English history—viz. the period of the Parliamentary War—having been attracted by the moral grandeur of some who figured in that day, and by the interesting memoirs which survive those unquiet times. Both these parts of my lighter reading, having furnished me often with matter of reflection, now furnished me with matter for my dreams. Often I used to see, after painting upon the blank darkness a sort of rehearsal whilst waking, a crowd of ladies, and perhaps a festival and dances. And I heard it said, or I said to myself, "These are English ladies from the unhappy times of Charles I. These are the wives and daughters

of those who met in peace, and sat at the same tables, and were allied by marriage or by blood; and yet, after a certain day in August 1642,[1] never smiled upon each other again, nor met but in the field of battle; and at Marston Moor, at Newbury, or at Naseby, cut asunder all ties of love by the cruel sabre, and washed away in blood the memory of ancient friendship." The ladies danced, and looked as lovely as at the court of George IV. Yet even in my dream I knew that they had been in the grave for nearly two centuries. This pageant would suddenly dissolve; and, at a clapping of hands, would be heard the heart-shaking sound of *Consul Romanus;* and immediately came "sweeping by," in gorgeous paludaments, Paullus or Marius, girt around by a company of centurions, with the crimson tunic[2] hoisted on a spear, and followed by the *alalagmos*[3] of the Roman legions.

Many years ago, when I was looking over Piranesi's "Antiquities of Rome," Coleridge, then standing by, described to me a set of plates from that artist, called his "Dreams," and which record the scenery of his own visions during the

[1] I think (but at the moment have no means of verifying my conjecture) that this day was the 24th of August. On or about that day Charles raised the royal standard at Nottingham; which, ominously enough (considering the strength of such superstitions in the seventeenth century, and, amongst the generations of that century, more especially in this particular generation of the Parliamentary War), was blown down during the succeeding night. Let me remark, in passing, that no falsehood can virtually be greater or more malicious than that which imputes to Archbishop Laud a special or exceptional faith in such mute warnings. [The King's standard, giving the signal for the English Civil War, was raised on the Castle Hill at Nottingham on the evening of Monday the 22d of August 1642, and is said to have been blown down by a violent wind that night, — though Rushworth's account discredits that legend. I do not understand the grounds of De Quincey's defence of Laud at this point against the imputation of superstitious belief in omens. Whether his faith in such "mute warnings" was "special or exceptional," in the sense of being stronger than was usual in his age, may admit of question; but that he was tremulously sensitive to dreams, omens, &c., is as certain as records can make anything.—M.]

[2] "*The crimson tunic*":—The signal which announced a day of battle.

[3] "*Alalagmos*":—A word expressing collectively the gathering of the Roman war-cries—*Alâla, Alâla!*

delirium of a fever. Some of these (I describe only from memory of Coleridge's account) represented vast Gothic halls; on the floor of which stood mighty engines and machinery, wheels, cables, catapults, &c., expressive of enormous power put forth, or resistance overcome. Creeping along the sides of the walls, you perceived a staircase; and upon this, groping his way upwards, was Piranesi himself. Follow the stairs a little farther, and you perceive them reaching an abrupt termination, without any balustrade, and allowing no step onwards to him who should reach the extremity, except into the depths below. Whatever is to become of poor Piranesi, at least you suppose that his labours must now in some way terminate. But raise your eyes, and behold a second flight of stairs still higher, on which again Piranesi is perceived, by this time standing on the very brink of the abyss. Once again elevate your eye, and a still more aerial flight of stairs is descried; and there, again, is the delirious Piranesi, busy on his aspiring labours: and so on, until the unfinished stairs and the hopeless Piranesi both are lost in the upper gloom of the hall. With the same power of endless growth and self-reproduction did my architecture proceed in dreams. In the early stage of the malady, the splendours of my dreams were indeed chiefly architectural; and I beheld such pomp of cities and palaces as never yet was beheld by the waking eye, unless in the clouds. From a great modern poet[1] I cite the part of a

[1] "*From a great modern poet*":—What poet? It was Wordsworth; and why did I not formally name him? This throws a light backwards upon the strange history of Wordsworth's reputation. The year in which I wrote and published these Confessions was 1821; and at that time the name of Wordsworth, though beginning to emerge from the dark cloud of scorn and contumely which had hitherto overshadowed it, was yet most imperfectly established. Not until ten years later was his greatness cheerfully and generally acknowledged. I, therefore, as the very earliest (without one exception) of all who came forward, in the beginning of his career, to honour and welcome him, shrank with disgust from making any sentence of mine the occasion for an explosion of vulgar malice against him. But the grandeur of the passage here cited inevitably spoke for itself; and he that would have been most scornful on hearing the name of the poet coupled with this epithet of "great" could not but find his malice intercepted, and himself cheated into cordial admiration, by the splendour of the verses. [The passage is from *The Excursion*, Book II.—M.]

passage which describes, as an appearance actually beheld in the clouds, what in many of its circumstances I saw frequently in sleep :—

> "The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
> Was of a mighty city—boldly say
> A wilderness of building, sinking far
> And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,
> Far sinking into splendour without end!
> Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
> With alabaster domes and silver spires,
> And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
> Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
> In avenues disposed; there, towers begirt
> With battlements that on their restless fronts
> Bore stars—illumination of all gems!
> By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
> Upon the dark materials of the storm
> Now pacified; on them, and on the coves,
> And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
> The vapours had receded, taking there
> Their station under a cerulean sky."

The sublime circumstance—"that on their *restless* fronts bore stars"—might have been copied from my own architectural dreams, so often did it occur. We hear it reported of Dryden, and in later times of Fuseli, that they ate raw meat for the sake of obtaining splendid dreams: how much better, for such a purpose, to have eaten opium, which yet I do not remember that any poet is recorded to have done, except the dramatist Shadwell; and in ancient days, Homer is, I think, rightly reputed to have known the virtues of opium as a φάρμακον νηπενθές—*i.e.* as an anodyne.

To my architecture succeeded dreams of lakes and silvery expanses of water: these haunted me so much that I feared lest some dropsical state or tendency of the brain might thus be making itself (to use a metaphysical word) *objective*,[1] and that the sentient organ might be projecting itself as its own object. For two months I suffered greatly in my head—a part of my bodily structure which had hitherto been so clear

[1] "*Objective*":—This word, so nearly unintelligible in 1821, so intensely scholastic, and, consequently, when surrounded by familiar and vernacular words, so apparently pedantic, yet, on the other hand, so indispensable to accurate thinking, and to *wide* thinking, has since 1821 become too common to need any apology.

from all touch or taint of weakness (physically, I mean) that I used to say of it, as the last Lord Orford said of his stomach, that it seemed likely to survive the rest of my person. Till now I had never felt a headache even, or any the slightest pain, except rheumatic pains caused by my own folly.

The waters gradually changed their character—from translucent lakes, shining like mirrors, they became seas and oceans. And now came a tremendous change, which, unfolding itself slowly like a scroll, through many months, promised an abiding torment; and, in fact, it never left me, though recurring more or less intermittingly. Hitherto the human face had often mixed in my dreams, but not despotically, nor with any special power of tormenting. But now that affection which I have called the tyranny of the human face began to unfold itself. Perhaps some part of my London life (the searching for Ann amongst fluctuating crowds) might be answerable for this. Be that as it may, now it was that upon the rocking waters of the ocean the human face began to reveal itself; the sea appeared paved with innumerable faces, upturned to the heavens; faces, imploring, wrathful, despairing; faces that surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations: infinite was my agitation; my mind tossed, as it seemed, upon the billowy ocean, and weltered upon the weltering waves.

May 1818.—The Malay has been a fearful enemy for months. Every night, through his means, I have been transported into Asiatic scenery. I know not whether others share in my feelings on this point; but I have often thought that, if I were compelled to forgo England, and to live in China, among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad. The causes of my horror lie deep, and some of them must be common to others. Southern Asia, in general, is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human race, if on no other ground, it would have a dim, reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes elsewhere, affect him in the way that he is affected by the ancient, monumental, cruel, and

elaborate religions of Hindostan. The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories,—above all, of their mythologies, &c.,—is so impressive that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual. A young Chinese seems to me an antediluvian man renewed. Even Englishmen, though not bred in any knowledge of such institutions, cannot but shudder at the mystic sublimity of *castes* that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through such immemorial tracts of time; nor can any man fail to be awed by the sanctity of the Ganges, or by the very name of the Euphrates. It contributes much to these feelings that South-eastern Asia is, and has been for thousands of years, the part of the earth most swarming with human life, the great *officina gentium*. Man is a weed in those regions. The vast empires, also, into which the enormous population of Asia has always been cast, give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all oriental names or images. In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of Southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, by the barrier of utter abhorrence placed between myself and *them*, by counter-sympathies deeper than I can analyse. I could sooner live with lunatics, with vermin, with crocodiles or snakes. All this, and much more than I can say, the reader must enter into before he can comprehend the unimaginable horror which these dreams of oriental imagery and mythological tortures impressed upon me. Under the connecting feeling of tropical heat and vertical sunlights, I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances, that are found in all tropical regions, and assembled them together in China or Hindostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt and her gods under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas, and was fixed for centuries at the summit, or in secret rooms; I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva lay in wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris: I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. Thousands of

years I lived and was buried in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles, and was laid, confounded with all unutterable abortions, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.

Some slight abstraction I thus attempt of my oriental dreams, which filled me always with such amazement at the monstrous scenery that horror seemed absorbed for a while in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me, not so much in terror, as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarceration, brooded a killing sense of eternity and infinity. Into these dreams only it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors. But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles, especially the last. The cursed crocodile became to me the object of more horror than all the rest. I was compelled to live with him ; and (as was always the case in my dreams) for centuries. Sometimes I escaped, and found myself in Chinese houses. All the feet of the tables, sofas, &c., soon became instinct with life : the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into ten thousand repetitions ; and I stood loathing and fascinated. So often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams that many times the very same dream was broken up in the very same way : I heard gentle voices speaking to me (I hear everything when I am sleeping), and instantly I awoke ; it was broad noon, and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bedside, come to show me their coloured shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them dressed for going out. No experience was so awful to me, and at the same time so pathetic, as this abrupt translation from the darkness of the infinite to the gaudy summer air of highest noon, and from the unutterable abortions of miscreated gigantic vermin to the sight of infancy and innocent *human* natures.

June 1819.—I have had occasion to remark, at various periods of my life, that the deaths of those whom we love,

and, indeed, the contemplation of death generally, is (*cæteris paribus*) more affecting in summer than in any other season of the year. And the reasons are these three, I think: first, that the visible heavens in summer appear far higher, more distant, and (if such a solecism may be excused) more infinite; the clouds by which chiefly the eye expounds the distance of the blue pavilion stretched over our heads are in summer more voluminous, more massed, and are accumulated in far grander and more towering piles; secondly, the light and the appearances of the declining and the setting sun are much more fitted to be types and characters of the infinite; and, thirdly (which is the main reason), the exuberant and riotous prodigality of life naturally forces the mind more powerfully upon the antagonist thought of death, and the wintry sterility of the grave. For it may be observed generally that, wherever two thoughts stand related to each other by a law of antagonism, and exist, as it were, by mutual repulsion, they are apt to suggest each other. On these accounts it is that I find it impossible to banish the thought of death when I am walking alone in the endless days of summer; and any particular death, if not actually more affecting, at least haunts my mind more obstinately and besiegingly, in that season. Perhaps this cause, and a slight incident which I omit, might have been the immediate occasions of the following dream, to which, however, a predisposition must always have existed in my mind; but, having been once roused, it never left me, and split into a thousand fantastic variations, which often suddenly re-combined, locked back into startling unity, and restored the original dream.

I thought that it was a Sunday morning in May; that it was Easter Sunday, and as yet very early in the morning. I was standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, but exalted, as was usual, and solemnised by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains, and the same lovely valley at their feet; but the mountains were raised to more than Alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of savannahs and forest lawns; the hedges were rich with

white roses; and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the green churchyard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves, and particularly round about the grave of a child whom I had once tenderly loved, just as I had really beheld them, a little before sunrise, in the same summer when that child died. I gazed upon the well-known scene, and I said to myself, "It yet wants much of sunrise; and it is Easter Sunday; and that is the day on which they celebrate the first-fruits of Resurrection. I will walk abroad; old griefs shall be forgotten to-day: for the air is cool and still, and the hills are high, and stretch away to heaven; and the churchyard is as verdant as the forest lawns, and the forest lawns are as quiet as the churchyard; and with the dew I can wash the fever from my forehead; and then I shall be unhappy no longer." I turned, as if to open my garden gate, and immediately I saw upon the left a scene far different; but which yet the power of dreams had reconciled into harmony. The scene was an oriental one; and there also it was Easter Sunday, and very early in the morning. And at a vast distance were visible, as a stain upon the horizon, the domes and cupolas of a great city—an image or faint abstraction, caught perhaps in childhood from some picture of Jerusalem. And not a bow-shot from me, upon a stone, shaded by Judean palms, there sat a woman; and I looked, and it was—Ann! She fixed her eyes upon me earnestly; and I said to her at length, "So, then, I have found you at last." I waited; but she answered me not a word. Her face was the same as when I saw it last; the same, and yet, again, how different! Seventeen years ago, when the lamp-light of mighty London fell upon her face, as for the last time I kissed her lips (lips, Ann, that to me were not polluted!), her eyes were streaming with tears. The tears were now no longer seen. Sometimes she seemed altered; yet again sometimes *not* altered; and hardly older. Her looks were tranquil, but with unusual solemnity of expression, and I now gazed upon her with some awe. Suddenly her countenance grew dim; and, turning to the mountains, I perceived vapours rolling between us; in a moment all had vanished; thick darkness came on; and in the twinkling of an eye I was far away from mountains, and by

lamp-light in London, walking again with Ann—just as we had walked, when both children, eighteen years before, along the endless terraces of Oxford Street.

Then suddenly would come a dream of far different character—a tumultuous dream—commencing with a music such as now I often heard in sleep—music of preparation and of awakening suspense. The undulations of fast-gathering tumults were like the opening of the Coronation Anthem; and, like *that*, gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of ultimate hope for human nature, then suffering mysterious eclipse, and labouring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, but I knew not where—somehow, but I knew not how—by some beings, but I knew not by whom—a battle, a strife, an agony, was travelling through all its stages—was evolving itself, like the catastrophe of some mighty drama, with which my sympathy was the more insupportable from deepening confusion as to its local scene, its cause, its nature, and its undecipherable issue. I (as is usual in dreams where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement) had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself to will it; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpiable guilt. "Deeper than ever plummet sounded," I lay inactive. Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake, some mightier cause, than ever yet the sword had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms; hurryings to and fro; trepidations of innumerable fugitives, I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness and lights; tempest and human faces; and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me; and but a moment allowed—and clasped hands, with heart-breaking partings, and then—everlasting farewells! and, with a sigh such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of Death, the sound was reverberated—everlasting farewells! and again, and yet again reverberated—everlasting farewells!

And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud, "I will sleep no more!".

Now, at last, I had become awestruck at the approach of sleep, under the condition of visions so afflicting, and so intensely life-like as those which persecuted my phantom-haunted brain. More and more also I felt violent palpitations in some internal region, such as are commonly, but erroneously, called palpitations of the heart—being, as I suppose, referable exclusively to derangements in the stomach. These were evidently increasing rapidly in frequency and in strength. Naturally, therefore, on considering how important my life had become to others besides myself, I became alarmed; and I paused seasonably; but with a difficulty that is past all description. Either way it seemed as though death had, in military language, "thrown himself astride of my path." Nothing short of mortal anguish, in a physical sense, it seemed, to wean myself from opium; yet, on the other hand, death through overwhelming nervous terrors—death by brain-fever or by lunacy—seemed too certainly to besiege the alternative course. Fortunately I had still so much of firmness left as to face that choice, which, with most of instant suffering, showed in the far distance a possibility of final escape.

This possibility was realised: I *did* accomplish my escape. And the issue of that particular stage in my opium experiences (for such it was—simply a provisional stage, that paved the way subsequently for many milder stages, to which gradually my constitutional system accommodated itself) was, pretty nearly in the following words, communicated to my readers in the earliest edition of these Confessions[1]:—

I triumphed. But infer not, reader, from this word "*triumphed*," a condition of joy or exultation. Think of me as of one, even when four months had passed, still agitated, writhing, throbbing, palpitating, shattered; and much, perhaps, in the situation of him who has been racked,

[1] The limitation "pretty nearly" is not unnecessary; for the concluding passage, like every other passage in the revised and enlarged text of the Confessions in the edition of 1856, differs considerably from the earlier text of 1822.—M.

as I collect the torments of that state from the affecting account of them left by a most innocent sufferer in the time of James I.[1] Meantime, I derived no benefit from any medicine whatever, except ammoniated tincture of valerian. The moral of the narrative is addressed to the opium-eater; and therefore, of necessity, limited in its application. If he is taught to fear and tremble, enough has been effected. But he may say that the issue of my case is at least a proof that opium, after an eighteen years' use, and an eight years' abuse, of its powers, may still be renounced; and that he may chance to bring to the task greater energy than I did, or that, with a stronger constitution, he may obtain the same results with less. This may be true; I would not presume to measure the efforts of other men by my own. Heartily I wish him more resolution; heartily I wish him an equal success. Nevertheless, I had motives external to myself which he may unfortunately want; and these supplied me with conscientious supports, such as merely selfish interests might fail in supplying to a mind debilitated by opium.

Lord Bacon conjectures that it may be as painful to be born as to die.[2] That seems probable; and, during the whole period of diminishing the opium, I had the torments of a man passing out of one mode of existence into another, and liable to the mixed or the alternate pains of birth and death. The issue was not death, but a sort of physical regeneration; and I may add that ever since, at intervals, I have had a restoration of more than youthful spirits.

One memorial of my former condition nevertheless remains: my dreams are not calm; the dread swell and

[1] William Lithgow. His book (Travels, &c.) is tedious and not well written; but the account of his own sufferings on the rack at Malaga, and subsequently, is overpoweringly affecting. Less circumstantial, but the same in tendency, is the report of the results from torture published in 1830 by Juan Van Halen.

[2] In all former editions I had ascribed this sentiment to Jeremy Taylor. On a close search, however, wishing to verify the quotation, it appeared that I had been mistaken. Something very like it occurs more than once in the bishop's voluminous writings: but the exact passage moving in my mind had evidently been this which follows, from Lord Bacon's "Essay on Death":—"It is as natural to die as to be born; and to a little infant perhaps the one is as painful as the other."

agitation of the storm have not wholly subsided ; the legions that encamped in them are drawing off, but not departed ; my sleep is still tumultuous ; and, like the gates of Paradise to our first parents when looking back from afar, it is still (in the tremendous line of Milton)—

"With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms."

THE DAUGHTER OF LEBANON[1]

DAMASCUS, first-born of cities, *Om el Denia*,[2] mother of generations, that wast before Abraham, that wast before the Pyramids! what sounds are those that, from a postern gate, looking eastwards over secret paths that wind away to the far distant desert, break the solemn silence of an oriental night? Whose voice is that which calls upon the spearmen,

[1] Originally printed by De Quincey in 1856 as an appendage to the enlarged edition of his *Confessions*, in the circumstances and for the reasons explained, *ante*, pp. 221, 222, in his "Prefatory Notice." He had hoped, he there explains, to enrich his *Confessions* by the addition of a number of illustrative specimens of Opium Dreams or Phantasies (doubtless a collection of such papers as those he had projected and begun in *Blackwood* in 1845 under the title of *Suspiria de Profundis*); but, though he had written a good many such, some had gone astray, and others had been accidentally burnt, so that he had been able to lay his hands only on this one,—*The Daughter of Lebanon*. To this by itself, accordingly, he had deputed the required duty, the rather because the heroine might be regarded as a visionary transfiguration of that poor Ann of Oxford Street who is in a sort the central personage of the *Confessions*. The explanation is perhaps a little forced; and a fitter place than the present might have been found in these volumes for *The Daughter of Lebanon*, had one been at liberty. De Quincey, however, having placed the paper here deliberately and with an avowed intention, that arrangement must be respected.—M.

[1] "*Om el Denia*":—Mother of the World is the Arabic title of Damascus. That it was before Abraham—*i.e.*, already an old establishment much more than a thousand years before the siege of Troy, and than two thousand years before our Christian era—may be inferred from Gen. xv. 2; and, by the general consent of all eastern races, Damascus is accredited as taking precedency in age of all cities to the west of the Indus.

keeping watch for ever in the turret surmounting the gate, to receive him back into his Syrian home? Thou knowest him, Damascus, and hast known him in seasons of trouble as one learned in the afflictions of man; wise alike to take counsel for the suffering spirit or for the suffering body. The voice that breaks upon the night is the voice of a great evangelist—one of the four; and he is also a great physician. This do the watchmen at the gate thankfully acknowledge, and joyfully they give him entrance. His sandals are white with dust; for he has been roaming for weeks beyond the desert, under the guidance of Arabs, on missions of hopeful benignity to Palmyra[1]; and in spirit he is weary of all things, except faithfulness to God, and burning love to man.

Eastern cities are asleep betimes; and sounds few or none fretted the quiet of all around him, as the evangelist paced onward to the market-place; but there another scene awaited him. On the right hand, in an upper chamber, with lattices widely expanded, sat a festal company of youths, revelling under a noonday blaze of light from cressets and from bright tripods that burned fragrant woods —all joining in choral songs, all crowned with odorous wreaths from Daphne and the banks of the Orontes. Them the evangelist heeded not; but far away upon the left, close upon a sheltered nook, lighted up by a solitary vase of iron fretwork filled with cedar boughs, and hoisted high upon a spear, behold there sat a woman of loveliness so transcendent that, when suddenly revealed, as now, out of deepest darkness, she appalled men as a mockery, or a birth of the air. Was she born of woman? Was it perhaps the angel—so the evangelist argued with himself—that met him in the desert after sunset, and strengthened him by secret talk? The evangelist went up, and touched her forehead; and, when he found that she was indeed human, and guessed, from the station which she had chosen, that she waited for some one amongst this dissolute crew as her companion, he groaned heavily in spirit, and said, half to himself, but half to her,

[1] Palmyra had not yet reached its meridian splendour of Grecian development, as afterwards near the age of Aurelian; but it was already a noble city.

"Wert thou, poor ruined flower, adorned so divinely at thy birth—glorified in such excess that not Solomon in all his pomp—no, nor even the lilies of the field—can approach thy gifts—only that thou shouldest grieve the Holy Spirit of God?" The woman trembled exceedingly, and said, "Rabbi, what should I do? For behold! all men forsake me." The evangelist mused a little, and then secretly to himself he said, "Now will I search this woman's heart—whether in very truth it inclineth itself to God, and hath strayed only before fiery compulsion. Turning therefore to the woman, the Prophet[1] said, "Listen: I am the messenger of Him whom thou hast not known; of Him that made Lebanon and the cedars of Lebanon; that made the sea, and the heavens, and the host of the stars; that made the light; that made the darkness; that blew the spirit of life into the nostrils of man. His messenger I am: and from Him all power is given me to bind and to loose, to build and to pull down. Ask, therefore, whatsoever thou wilt—great or small—and through me thou shalt receive it from God. But, my child, ask not amiss. For God is able out of thy own evil asking to weave snares for thy footing. And oftentimes to the lambs whom He loves he gives by seeming to refuse; gives in some better sense, or" (and his voice swelled into the power of anthems) "in some far happier world. Now, therefore, my daughter, be wise on thy own behalf; and say what it is that I shall ask for thee from God." But the Daughter of Lebanon needed not his caution; for immediately, dropping on one knee to God's ambassador, whilst the full radiance from the cedar torch fell upon the glory of a penitential eye, she raised her clasped hands in sup-

[1] "*The Prophet*":—Though a Prophet was not *therefore* and in virtue of that character an Evangelist, yet every Evangelist was necessarily in the scriptural sense a Prophet. For let it be remembered that a Prophet did not mean a *Pre*dicter, or *Fore*shower of events, except derivatively and inferentially. What *was* a Prophet in the uniform scriptural sense? He was a man who drew aside the curtain from the secret counsels of Heaven. He declared, or made public, the previously hidden truths of God: and, because future events might chance to involve divine truth, therefore a revealer of future events might happen so far to be a Prophet. Yet still small was that part of a Prophet's functions which concerned the foreshowing of events; and not necessarily *any* part.

plication, and said, in answer to the evangelist asking for a second time what gift he should call down upon her from Heaven, "Lord, that thou wouldest put me back into my father's house." And the evangelist, because he was human, dropped a tear as he stooped to kiss her forehead, saying, "Daughter, thy prayer is heard in heaven; and I tell thee that the day-light shall not come and go for thirty times, not for the thirtieth time shall the sun drop behind Lebanon, before I will put thee back into thy father's house."

Thus the lovely lady came into the guardianship of the evangelist. She sought not to varnish her history, or to palliate her own transgressions. In so far as she had offended at all, her case was that of millions in every generation. Her father was a prince in Lebanon, proud, unforgiving, austere. The wrongs done to his daughter by her dishonourable lover, because done under favour of opportunities created by her confidence in his integrity, her father persisted in resenting as wrongs done by this injured daughter herself; and, refusing to her all protection, drove her, whilst yet confessedly innocent, into criminal compliances under sudden necessities of seeking daily bread from her own uninstructed efforts. Great was the wrong she suffered both from father and lover; great was the retribution. She lost a churlish father and a wicked lover; she gained an apostolic guardian. She lost a princely station in Lebanon; she gained an early heritage in heaven. For this heritage is hers within thirty days, if she will not defeat it herself. And, whilst the stealthy motion of time travelled towards this thirtieth day, behold! a burning fever desolated Damascus, which also laid its arrest upon the Daughter of Lebanon, yet gently, and so that hardly for an hour did it withdraw her from the heavenly teachings of the evangelist. And thus daily the doubt was strengthened—would the holy apostle suddenly touch her with his hand, and say, "Woman, be thou whole!" or would he present her on the thirtieth day as a pure bride to Christ? But perfect freedom belongs to Christian service, and she only must make the election.

Up rose the sun on the thirtieth morning in all his pomp, but suddenly was darkened by driving storms. Not until

noon was the heavenly orb again revealed ; then the glorious light was again unmasked, and again the Syrian valleys rejoiced. This was the hour already appointed for the baptism of the new Christian daughter. Heaven and earth shed gratulation on the happy festival ; and, when all was finished, under an awning raised above the level roof of her dwelling-house, the regenerate daughter of Lebanon, looking over the rose-gardens of Damascus, with amplest prospect of her native hills, lay in blissful trance, making proclamation, by her white baptismal robes, of recovered innocence and of reconciliation with God. And, when the sun was declining to the west, the evangelist, who had sat from noon by the bedside of his spiritual daughter, rose solemnly, and said, "Lady of Lebanon, the day is already come, and the hour is coming, in which my covenant must be fulfilled with thee. Wilt thou, therefore, being now wiser in thy thoughts, suffer God thy new Father to give by seeming to refuse ; to give in some better sense, or in some far happier world ?" But the Daughter of Lebanon sorrowed at these words ; she yearned after her native hills ; not for themselves, but because there it was that she had left that sweet twin-born sister with whom from infant days hand-in-hand she had wandered amongst the everlasting cedars. And again the evangelist sat down by her bedside ; whilst she by intervals communed with him, and by intervals slept gently under the oppression of her fever. But, as evening drew nearer, and it wanted now but a brief space to the going down of the sun, once again, and with deeper solemnity, the evangelist rose to his feet, and said, "O daughter ! this is the thirtieth day, and the sun is drawing near to his rest ; brief, therefore, is the time within which I must fulfil the word that God spoke to thee by me." Then, because light clouds of delirium were playing about her brain, he raised his pastoral staff, and, pointing it to her temples, rebuked the clouds, and bade that no more they should trouble her vision, or stand between her and the forests of Lebanon. And the delirious clouds parted asunder, breaking away to the right and to the left. But upon the forests of Lebanon there hung a mighty mass of overshadowing vapours, bequeathed by the morning's storm. And a second time the evangelist raised his pastoral

staff, and, pointing it to the gloomy vapours, rebuked them, and bade that no more they should stand between his daughter and her father's house. And immediately the dark vapours broke away from Lebanon to the right and to the left; and the farewell radiance of the sun lighted up all the paths that ran between the everlasting cedars and her father's palace. But vainly the lady of Lebanon searched every path with her eyes for memorials of her sister. And the evangelist, pitying her sorrow, turned away her eyes to the clear blue sky, which the departing vapours had exposed. And he showed her the peace which was there. And then he said, "O daughter! this also is but a mask." And immediately for the third time he raised his pastoral staff, and, pointing it to the fair blue sky, he rebuked it, and bade that no more it should stand between her and the vision of God. Immediately the blue sky parted to the right and to the left, laying bare the infinite revelations that can be made visible only to dying eyes. And the Daughter of Lebanon said to the evangelist, "O father! what armies are these that I see mustering within the infinite chasm?" And the evangelist replied, "These are the armies of Christ, and they are mustering to receive some dear human blossom, some first-fruits of Christian faith, that shall rise this night to Christ from Damascus." Suddenly, as thus the child of Lebanon gazed upon the mighty vision, she saw bending forward from the heavenly host, as if in gratulation to herself, the one countenance for which she hungered and thirsted. The twin-sister, that should have waited for her in Lebanon, had died of grief, and was waiting for her in Paradise. Immediately in rapture she soared upwards from her couch; immediately in weakness she fell back; and, being caught by the evangelist, she flung her arms around his neck; whilst he breathed into her ear his final whisper, "Wilt thou now suffer that God should give by seeming to refuse?"—"Oh yes—yes—yes," was the fervent answer from the Daughter of Lebanon. Immediately the evangelist gave the signal to the heavens, and the heavens gave the signal to the sun; and in one minute after the Daughter of Lebanon had fallen back a marble corpse amongst her white baptismal robes; the solar orb dropped behind Lebanon; and the evangelist, with

eyes glorified by mortal and immortal tears, rendered thanks to God that had thus accomplished the word which he spoke through himself to the Magdalen of Lebanon—that not for the thirtieth time should the sun go down behind her native hills before he had put her back into her Father's house.

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APPENDIX

De Quincey.—Page 286.

This family, which split (or, as a grammatical purist lately said to me in a tone of expostulation, *splat*) into three national divisions—English, French, and American—originally was Norwegian: and in the year of our Christian era *one thousand* spoke (I believe) the most undeniable Norse. Throughout the eleventh century the heads of this family (in common with all the ruffians and martial vagabonds of Europe that had Venetian sequins enough disposable for such a trip) held themselves in readiness to join any *likely* leader; and did join William the Norman. Very few indeed, or probably none, of his brigands were Frenchmen, or native Neustrians; Normans being notoriously a name not derived *from* any French province, but imported *into* that province by trans-Baltic, and in a smaller proportion by cis-Baltic, aliens. This Norwegian family, having assumed a territorial denomination from the district or village of Quincy, in the province now called Normandy, transplanted themselves to England: where, and subsequently by marriage in Scotland, they ascended to the highest rank in both kingdoms, and held the highest offices open to a subject. A late distinguished writer, Mr. Moir of Musselburgh, the *Delta* of "Blackwood's Magazine," took the trouble (which must have been considerable) of tracing their aspiring movements in Scotland, through a period when Normans transferred themselves from England to Scotland in considerable numbers, and with great advantages. This elaborate paper, published many years ago in "Blackwood's Magazine," first made known the leading facts of their career in Scotland. Meantime in England they continued to flourish through nine or ten generations; took a distinguished part in one, at least, of the Crusades; and a still more perilous share in the Barons' Wars under Henry III. No family drank more deeply or more frequently from the cup of treason; which in those days was not always a very grave offence in people who, having much territorial influence, had also much money. But, happening to drink once too often, or taking too long a "pull" at the cup, the Earls

of Winchester suddenly came to grief. Amongst the romances of astronomy there is one, I believe, which has endeavoured to account for the little asteroids of our system by supposing them fragments of some great planet that had, under internal convulsion or external collision, at some period suddenly exploded. In our own planet Tellus such a county as York, under a similar catastrophe, would make a very pretty little asteroid. And, with some miniature resemblance to such a case, sometimes benefiting by the indulgence of the crown, sometimes by legal devices, sometimes by aid of matrimonial alliances, numerous descendants, confessedly innocent, from the guilty earl projected themselves by successive efforts, patiently watching their opportunities, from the smoking ruins of the great feudal house: stealthily through two generations creeping out of their lurking holes; timidly, when the great shadows from the threatening throne had passed over, re-assuming the family name. Concurrently with these *personal* fragments projected from the ancient house, flew off random splinters and fragments from the great planetary disk of the Winchester estates, little asteroids that formed ample inheritances for the wants of this or that provincial squire, of this or that tame villatic squireen.[1]

The kingly old oak, that had been the leader of the forest, was thus suddenly (in the technical language of wood-craft) cut down into a "pollard." This mutilation for ever prevented it from aspiring cloudwards by means of some mighty stem, such as grows upon Norwegian hills, fit to be the mast of "some great ammiral." Nevertheless, we see daily amongst the realities of nature that a tree, after passing through such a process of degradation, yet manifests the great arrears of vindictive life lurking within it by throwing out a huge radiation of slender boughs and miniature shoots, small but many, so that we are forced exactly to invert the fine words of Lucan, saying no longer *trunco, non frondibus, efficit umbram*, but, on the contrary, *non trunco sed frondibus efficit umbram*. This great cabbage-head of this ancient human tree threw a broad massy umbrage over more villages than one; sometimes yielding representatives moody and mutinous, sometimes vivacious and inventive, sometimes dull and lethargic, until at last, one fine morning, on rubbing their eyes, they found themselves actually in the sixteenth century abreast of Henry VIII and his fiery children. Ah, what a century was that! Sculptured as only Froude can sculpture those that fight across the chasms of eternity, grouped as only Froude can group the mighty factions, acting or suffering, arraigning before chanceries of man, or protesting before chanceries of God—what vast arrays of marble gladiators fighting for truth, real or imagined, throng the arenas in each generation of that and the succeeding century. And how ennobling a distinction of modern humanity, that in Pagan antiquity no truth as yet existed, none had been revealed, none emblazoned, on behalf of which man *could* have fought! As Lord Bacon

[1] This last variety of the rustic *regulus* is of Hibernian origin, and, as regards the name, was unknown to us in England until Miss Edgeworth had extended the horizon of our social experience. Yet, without the name, I presume that the *thing* must have been known occasionally even in England.

remarks—though strangely, indeed, publishing in the very terms of this remark his own blindness to the causes and consequences—religious wars were unknown to antiquity. Personal interests, and those only, did or could furnish a subject of conflict. But throughout the sixteenth century, whether in England, in France, or in Germany, it was a spiritual interest, shadowy and aerial, which embattled armies against armies. Simply the nobility of this interest it was, simply the grandeur of a cause moving by springs transcendent to all vulgar and mercenary collisions of prince with prince, or family with family, that arrayed man against man, not upon petty combinations of personal intrigue, but upon questions of everlasting concern — this majestic principle of the strife it was that constituted for the noblest minds its secret magnetism. Early in the seventeenth century, when it seemed likely that the interests of a particular family would be entangled with the principles at issue, multitudes became anxious to evade the strife by retiring to the asylum of forests. Amongst these was one branch of the De Quinceys. Enamoured of democracy, this family, laying aside the aristocratic *De* attached to their name, settled in New England, where they subsequently rose, through long public services, to the highest moral rank—as measured by all possible expressions of public esteem that are consistent with the simplicities of the great republic. Mr. Josiah Quincy, as head of this distinguished family, is appealed to as one who takes rank by age and large political experience with the founders of the American Union. Another branch of the same family had at a much earlier period settled in France. Finally, the squires and squireens—*i.e.*, those who benefited in any degree by those "asteroids" which I have explained as exploded from the ruins of the Winchester estates—naturally remained in England. The last of them who enjoyed any relics whatever of that ancient territorial domain was an elder kinsman of my father. I never had the honour of seeing him; in fact, it was impossible that I *should* have such an honour, since he died during the American War, which war had closed, although it had not paid its bills, some time before my birth. He enacted the part of squireen, I have been told, creditably enough in a village belonging either to the county of Leicester, Nottingham, or Rutland. Sir Andrew Aguecheek observes, as one of his sentimental remembrances, that he also at one period of his life had been "adored": "I was adored once," says the knight, seeming to acknowledge that he was not adored then. But the squireen was "adored" in a limited way to the last. This fading representative of a crusading house declined gradually into the oracle of the bar at the Red Lion, and was adored by two persons at the least (not counting himself)—viz., the landlord, and occasionally the waiter. Mortgages had eaten up the last vestiges of the old territorial wrecks; and with his death a new era commenced for this historical family, which now (as if expressly to irritate its ambition) finds itself distributed amongst three mighty nations—France, America, and England—and precisely those three that are usually regarded as the leaders of civilisation.[1]

[1] The omission of the *De*, as an addition looking better at a tournament than

Barbara Lewthwaite—Page 404.

Already Barbara Lewthwaite had contributed to the composition of two impressive pictures: first, in her infancy, with her pet lamb, under the evening shadows of the mighty Fairfield; secondly, in her girlhood, with the turbaned Malay and the little cottage child. But subsequently, when a young woman, she entered unconsciously into the composition of another picture even more rememberable, suggesting great names, connected with the greatest of themes; the names being those of Plato, and, in this instance at least, of a mightier than Plato — viz. William Wordsworth; and the theme concerned being that problem which, measured by its interest to man, by its dependencies, by the infinite jewel staked upon the verdict, we should all confess to be the most solemn and heart-shaking that is hung out by golden chains from the heaven of heavens to human investigation—viz. Is the spirit of man numbered amongst things naturally perishable? The doctrine of our own Dodwell (a most orthodox man) was that naturally and *per se* it was perishable, but that by supernatural endowment it was made immortal. Apparently the ancient oracles of the Hebrew literature had all and everywhere assumed the soul's natural mortality. The single passage in Job that *seemed* to look in the counter direction has long since received an interpretation painfully alien from such a meaning; not to mention that the same objection would apply to this passage, if read into a Christian sense, as applies to the ridiculous interpolation in Josephus describing Christ's personal appearance—viz., Once suppose it genuine, and why were there not myriads of other passages in the same key? Imagine, for a moment, the writer so penetrated with premature Christian views, by what inexplicable rigour of abstinence had he forborne to meet ten thousand calls, at other turns of his work, for similar utterances of Christian sentiment? It must not be supposed that the objections to this Christian interpretation of Job rest solely with German scholars. Coleridge, one of the most devout and evangelical amongst modern theologians, took the same view, and has expressed it with decision. But Job is of slight importance in comparison with Moses. Now Warburton, in his well-known argument, held not only that Moses *did* (as a fact) assume the mortality of the soul, but that, as a necessity, he did so, since upon this assumption rests the weightiest argument for his own divine mission. That Moses could dispense with a support which Warburton fancied all other legislators had needed and postulated argued, in the bishop's opinion, a vicarious support—a secret and divine support. This extreme view will be rejected, perhaps, by most people. But, in the meantime, the very existence of such a sect as the Sadducees proves sufficiently that

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as an indorsement on a bill of exchange, began, as to many hundreds of English names, full three hundred years ago. Many English families have disused this affix simply from indolence. As to the terminal variations, *cy*, *cie*, *cey*, those belong, as natural and inevitable exponents of a transitional condition, to the unsettled spelling that characterises the early stages of literature in all countries alike.

no positive affirmation of the soul's immortality could have been accredited amongst the Hebrew nation as a Mosaic doctrine. The rise of a counter sect, the Pharisees, occurred in later days, clearly under a principle of "development" applied to old traditions current among the Jews. It was not alleged as a Mosaic doctrine, but as something deducible from traditions countenanced by Moses. From Hebrew literature, therefore, no help is to be looked for on this great question. Pagan literature first of all furnishes any response upon it favourable to human yearnings. But, unhappily, the main argument upon which the sophist in the *Phædo* relies is a pure scholastic conundrum, baseless and puerile. The homogeneity of human consciousness, upon which is made to rest its indestructibility, is not established or made probable by any plausible logic. If we should figure to ourselves some mighty angel mounting guard upon human interests twenty-three centuries ago, this tutelary spirit would have smiled derisively upon the advent and the departure of Plato. At length, once again, after many centuries, was heard the clarion of immortality—not as of any preternatural gift, but as a natural prerogative of the human spirit. This time the angel would have paused and hearkened. The auguries for immortality which Wordsworth drew from indications running along the line of daily human experience were two.

The first was involved in the exquisite little poem of "We are Seven." That authentic voice, said Wordsworth, which affirmed life as a necessity inalienable from man's consciousness was a revelation through the lips of childhood. Life in its torrent fulness—that is, life in its earliest stage—affirmed itself; whereas the voice which whispered doubts was an adventitious and secondary voice consequent upon an earthly experience. The child in this little poem is unable to admit the thought of death, though, in compliance with custom, she uses the word :—

> "The first that *died* was little Jane;
> In bed she moaning lay,
> Till God released her from her pain;
> And then she went away."

The graves of her brother and sister she is so far from regarding as any argument of their having died that she supposes the stranger simply to doubt her statement, and she reiterates her assertion of their graves as lying in the churchyard, in order to prove that they were *living* :—

> "'Their graves are green, they may be seen,'
> The little maid replied,
> 'Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
> And they are side by side.
> And often after sunset, sir,
> When it is light and fair,
> I take my little porringer,
> And eat my supper there.
> My stockings there I often knit,
> My kerchief there I hem;
> And there upon their graves I sit—
> I sit, and sing to them.'"

The other argument was developed in the sublime "Ode upon the Intimations of Immortality," &c. Man in his infancy stood *nearest* (so much was matter of fact) to the unseen world of the Infinite. What voices he heard most frequently, murmuring through the cells of his infantine brain, were echoes of the great realities which, as a new-born infant, he had just quitted. Hanging upon his mother's breast, he heard dim prolongations of a music which belonged to a life ever more and more receding into a distance buried in clouds and vapours. Man's orient, in which lie the fountains of the dawn, must be sought for in that Eden of infancy which first received him as a traveller emerging from a world now daily becoming more distant. And it is a great argument of the divine splendour investing man's natural home that the heavenly lights which burned in his morning grow fainter and fainter as he "travels farther from the East."

The little Carnarvonshire child in "We are Seven," who is represented as repelling the idea of death under an absolute inability to receive it, had completed her eighth year. But this might be an ambitious exaggeration, such as aspiring female children are generally disposed to practise. It is more probable that she might be in the currency of her eighth year. Naturally we must not exact from Wordsworth any pedantic rigour of accuracy in such a case: but assuredly we have a right to presume that his principle, if tenable at all, must apply to all children below the age of *five*. However, I will say *four*. In that case the following anecdote seems to impeach the philosophic truth of this doctrine. I give the memorandum as it was drawn up by myself at the time:—

My second child, but eldest daughter, little M——, is between two and three weeks less than two years old: and from the day of her birth she has been uniformly attended by Barbara Lewthwaite. We are now in the first days of June; but, about three weeks since, consequently in the earlier half of May, some one of our neighbours gave to M—— a little bird. I am no great ornithologist. "Perhaps only a tenth-rate one," says some too flattering reader. Oh dear, no, nothing near it: I fear, no more than a 510th rater. Consequently, I cannot ornithologically describe or classify the bird. But I believe that it belonged to the family of finches—either a goldfinch, bullfinch, or at least something ending in *inch*. The present was less splendid than at first it seemed. For the bird was wounded, though not in a way that made the wound apparent; and too sensibly as the evening wore away it drooped. None of us knew what medical treatment to suggest; and all that occurred was to place it with free access to bird-seed and water. At length sunset arrived, which was the signal for M——'s departure to bed. She came therefore as usual to me, threw her arms round my neck, and went through her ordinary routine of prayers: viz., first, the Lord's Prayer, and finally the four following lines (a Roman Catholic bequest to the children of Northern England):—

"Holy[1] Jesus, meek and mild,
Look on me, a little child:
Pity my simplicity;
Grant that I may come to thee."

M——, as she was moving off to bed, whispered to me that I was to "mend" the bird with "yoddonum." Having always seen *me* taking laudanum, and for the purpose (as she was told) of growing better in health, reasonably it struck her that the little bird would improve under the same regimen. For her satisfaction, I placed a little diluted laudanum near to the bird; and she then departed to bed, though with uneasy looks reverting to her sick little pet. Occupied with some point of study, it happened that I sat up through the whole night: and long before seven o'clock in the morning she had summoned Barbara to dress her, and soon I heard the impatient little foot descending the stairs to my study. I had such a Jesuitical *bulletin* ready, by way of a report upon the bird's health, as might not seem absolutely despairing, though not too dangerously sanguine. And, as the morning was one of heavenly splendour, I proposed that we should improve the bird's chances by taking it out-of-doors into the little orchard at the foot of Fairfield—our loftiest Grasmere mountain. Thither moved at once Barbara Lewthwaite, little M——, myself, and the poor languishing bird. By that time in May, in any far southern county, perhaps the birds would be ceasing to sing; but not so with us dilatory people in Westmoreland. Suddenly, as we all stood around the little perch on which the bird rested, one thrilling song, louder than the rest, arose from a neighbouring hedge. Immediately the bird's eye, previously dull, kindled into momentary fire: the bird rose on its perch, struggled for an instant, seemed to be expanding its wings, made one aspiring movement upwards, in doing so fell back, and in another moment was dead. Too certainly and apparently all these transitions symbolically interpreted themselves, and to all of us alike: the proof of which was that man, woman, and child spontaneously shed tears: a weakness, perhaps, but more natural under the regular processional evolution of the scenical stages than when simply read as a narrative: for too evident it was, to one and all of us, without needing to communicate by words, *what* vision had revealed itself to all alike—to the child under two years old, not less than to the adults: too evident it was that, on this magnificent May morning, there had been exhibited, as on the stage of a theatre—there had passed before the eyes of us all—passed, and was finished—the everlasting mystery of death! It seemed to me that little M——, by her sudden burst of tears, must have read this saddest of truths—must have felt that the bird's fate was sealed—not less clearly than Barbara or myself.

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[1] "*Holy Jesus*":—This was a very judicious correction introduced by Wordsworth. Originally the traditional line had stood—"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." But Wordsworth, offended by the idle iteration of one idea in the words, gentle, meek, mild, corrected the text into *Holy*.

To these notes by De Quincey himself to the text of his enlarged edition of the CONFESSIONS in 1856 have now to be added the two documents, appertaining to the CONFESSIONS in their original form, of which mention has been made, and a general description given, in the Editor's Preface, *ante*, p. 6 and p. 10.

I. DE QUINCEY'S LETTER IN THE LONDON MAGAZINE FOR DECEMBER 1821.

To the Editor of the London Magazine.

SIR,

. . . . . .

But to leave this subject, and to pass to another more immediately connected with your Journal:—I have seen in the Sheffield Iris a notice of my two papers entitled *Confessions of an English Opium-eater*. Notice of any sort from Mr. Montgomery could not have failed to gratify me, by proving that I had so far succeeded in my efforts as to catch the attention of a distinguished man of genius: a notice so emphatic as this, and introduced by an exordium of so much beauty as that contained in the two first paragraphs on the faculty of dreaming, I am bound in gratitude to acknowledge as a more flattering expression and memorial of success than any which I had allowed myself to anticipate.

I am not sorry that a passage in Mr. Montgomery's comments enables me to take notice of a doubt which had reached me before. The passage I mean is this: in the fourth page of the Iris, amongst the remarks with which Mr. Montgomery has introduced the extracts which he has done me the honour to make, it is said—"whether this character" (the character in which the Opium-eater speaks) "be real or imaginary, we know not." The same doubt was reported to me as having been made in another quarter, but in that instance as clothed in such discourteous expressions that I do not think it would have been right for me, or that on a principle of just self-respect I could have brought myself, to answer it at all; which I say in no anger, and I hope with no other pride than that which may reasonably influence any man in refusing an answer to all direct impeachments of his veracity. From Mr. Montgomery, however, this scruple on the question of authenticity comes in the shape which might have been anticipated from his own courteous and honourable nature, and implies no more than a suggestion (in one view perhaps complimentary to myself) that the whole might be professedly and intentionally a fictitious case as respected the incidents, and chosen as a more impressive form for communicating some moral or medical admonitions to the unconfirmed Opium-eater. Thus shaped, I cannot have any right to quarrel with this scruple. But on many accounts I should be sorry that such a view were taken of the narrative by those who may have happened to read it. And therefore I assure Mr. Montgomery, in this public way, that the entire Confessions were designed to convey a narrative of my own experience as an Opium-eater, drawn up with entire simplicity and fidelity to the facts; from which they can in no

respect have deviated, except by such trifling inaccuracies of date, &c., as the memoranda I have with me in London would not, in all cases, enable me to reduce to certainty. Over and above the want of these memoranda, I laboured sometimes (as I will acknowledge) under another, and a graver embarrassment:—To tell nothing *but* the truth must, in all cases, be an unconditional moral law: to tell the *whole* truth is not equally so: in the earlier narrative I acknowledge that I could not always do this: regards of delicacy towards some who are yet living, and of just tenderness to the memory of others who are dead, obliged me, at various points of my narrative, to suppress what would have added interest to the story, and sometimes, perhaps, have left impressions on the reader favourable to other purposes of an autobiographer. In cases which touch too closely on their own rights and interests, all men should hesitate to trust their own judgment: thus far I imposed a restraint upon myself, as all just and conscientious men would do: in everything else I spoke fearlessly, and as if writing private memoirs for my own dearest friends. Events, indeed, in my life, connected with so many remembrances of grief, and sometimes of self-reproach, had become too sacred from habitual contemplation to be altered or distorted for the unworthy purposes of scenical effect and display, without violating those feelings of self-respect which all men should cherish, and giving a lasting wound to my conscience.

Having replied to the question involved in the passage quoted from the Iris, I ought to notice an objection conveyed to me through many channels, and in too friendly terms to have been overlooked if I had thought it unfounded: whereas, I believe it is a very just one.—It is this: that I have so managed the second narrative as to leave an overbalance on the side of the *pleasures* of opium, and that the very horrors themselves, described as connected with the use of opium, do not pass the limit of pleasure.—I know not how to excuse myself on this head, unless by alleging (what is obvious enough) that to describe any pains, of any class, and that at perfect leisure for choosing and rejecting thoughts and expressions, is a most difficult task. In my case I scarcely know whether it is competent to me to allege further that I was limited, both as to space and time, so long as it appears on the face of my paper that I did not turn all that I had of either to the best account. It is known to you, however, that I wrote in extreme haste, and under very depressing circumstances in other respects.—On the whole, perhaps, the best way of meeting this objection will be to send you a Third Part of my Confessions[1]: drawn up with such assistance from fuller memoranda, and the recollections of my only companion during those years, as I shall be able to command on my

[1] In the Third Part I will fill up an omission noticed by the *Medical Intelligencer* (No. 24): viz. the omission to record the particular effects of the Opium between 1804-12. This *Medical Intelligencer* is a sort of digest or analytic summary of contemporary medical essays, reviews, &c., wherever dispersed. Of its general merits I cannot pretend to judge: but, in justice to the writer of the article which respects myself, I ought to say that it is the most remarkable specimen of skilful abridgment and judicious composition that I remember to have met with.

return to the north. I hope that I shall be able to return thither in the course of next week: and, therefore, by the end of January, or thereabouts, I shall have found leisure from my other employments to finish it to my own satisfaction. I do not venture to hope that it will realize the whole of what is felt to be wanting: but it is fit that I should make the effort, if it were only to meet the expressions of interest in my previous papers which have reached me from all quarters, or to mark my sense of the personal kindness which, in many cases, must have dictated the terms in which that interest was conveyed.

This, I think, is what I had to say. Some things which I might have been disposed to add would not be fitting in a public letter. Let me say, however, generally, that these two papers of mine, short and inconsiderable as they are, have, in one way, produced a disproportionate result, though but of a personal nature, by leading to many kind acts, and generous services, and expressions of regard, in many different shapes, from men of talents in London.

To these hereafter I shall look back as to a fund of pleasant remembrances. Meantime, for the present, they have rendered me a service not less acceptable by making my residence in London, in many respects, agreeable, at a time when, on other accounts, it should naturally have been far otherwise.

I remain, Sir,

Your faithful friend and servant,

X. Y. Z.

London, Nov. 27, 1821.

II. The "Appendix" to the Confessions on their First Publication in Book Form in 1822.

The Proprietors of this little work having determined on reprinting it, some explanation seems called for, to account for the non-appearance of a Third Part promised in the *London Magazine* of December last; and the more so because the proprietors, under whose guarantee that promise was issued, might otherwise be implicated in the blame —little or much—attached to its non-fulfilment. This blame, in mere justice, the author takes wholly upon himself. What may be the exact amount of the guilt which he thus appropriates is a very dark question to his own judgment, and not much illuminated by any of the masters on casuistry whom he has consulted on the occasion. On the one hand, it seems generally agreed that a promise is binding in the *inverse* ratio of the numbers to whom it is made: for which reason it is that we see many persons break promises without scruple that are made to a whole nation who keep their faith religiously in all private engagements,—breaches of promise towards the stronger party being committed at a man's own peril. On the other hand, the only parties interested in the promises of an author are his readers; and these it is a point of modesty in any author to believe as few as

possible ; or perhaps only one,—in which case any promise imposes a sanctity of moral obligation which it is shocking to think of. Casuistry dismissed, however, the author throws himself on the indulgent consideration of all who may conceive themselves aggrieved by his delay, in the following account of his own condition from the end of last year, when the engagement was made, up nearly to the present time. For any purpose of self-excuse, it might be sufficient to say that intolerable bodily suffering had totally disabled him for almost any exertion of mind, more especially for such as demand and presuppose a pleasurable and a genial state of feeling ; but, as a case that may by possibility contribute a trifle to the medical history of Opium in a further stage of its action than can often have been brought under the notice of professional men, he has judged that it might be acceptable to some readers to have it described more at length. *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili* is a just rule where there is any reasonable presumption of benefit to arise on a large scale. What the benefit may be will admit of a doubt ; but there can be none as to the value of the body : for a more worthless body than his own, the author is free to confess, cannot be. It is his pride to believe that it is the very ideal of a base, crazy, despicable human system, that hardly ever could have been meant to be seaworthy for two days under the ordinary storms and wear-and-tear of life : and, indeed, if that were the creditable way of disposing of human bodies, he must own that he should almost be ashamed to bequeath his wretched structure to any respectable dog.—But now to the case ; which, for the sake of avoiding the constant recurrence of a cumbersome periphrasis, the author will take the liberty of giving in the first person.

Those who have read the Confessions will have closed them with the impression that I had wholly renounced the use of Opium. This impression I meant to convey, and that for two reasons : first, because the very act of deliberately recording such a state of suffering necessarily presumes in the recorder a power of surveying his own case as a cool spectator, and a degree of spirits for adequately describing it, which it would be inconsistent to suppose in any person speaking from the station of an actual sufferer ; secondly, because I, who had descended from so large a quantity as 8000 drops to so small a one (comparatively speaking) as a quantity ranging between 300 and 160 drops, might well suppose that the victory was in effect achieved. In suffering my readers, therefore, to think of me as of a reformed Opium-eater, I left no impression but what I shared myself ; and, as may be seen, even this impression was left to be collected from the general tone of the conclusion, and not from any specific words,—which are in no instance at variance with the literal truth.—In no long time after that paper was written, I became sensible that the effort which remained would cost me far more energy than I had anticipated ; and the necessity for making it was more apparent every month. In particular, I became aware of an increasing callousness or defect of sensibility in the stomach ; and this I imagined might imply a scirrhous state of that organ, either formed or forming. An eminent

physician, to whose kindness I was at that time deeply indebted, informed me that such a termination of my case was not impossible, though likely to be forestalled by a different termination, in the event of my continuing the use of opium. Opium, therefore, I resolved wholly to abjure, as soon as I should find myself at liberty to bend my undivided attention and energy to this purpose. It was not, however, until the 24th of June last that any tolerable concurrence of facilities for such an attempt arrived. On that day I began my experiment, having previously settled in my own mind that I would not flinch, but would "stand up to the scratch," under any possible "punishment." I must premise that about 170 or 180 drops had been my ordinary allowance for many months. Occasionally I had run up as high as 500, and once nearly to 700. In repeated preludes to my final experiment I had also gone as low as 100 drops, but had found it impossible to stand it beyond the fourth day,—which, by the way, I have always found more difficult to get over than any of the preceding three. I went off under easy sail—130 drops a day for three days: on the fourth I plunged at once to 80. The misery which I now suffered "took the conceit" out of me at once; and for about a month I continued off and on about this mark: then I sunk to 60, and the next day to—none at all. This was the first day for nearly ten years that I had existed without opium. I persevered in my abstinence for ninety hours; that is, upwards of half a week. Then I took —— ask me not how much: say, ye severest, what would ye have done? Then I abstained again: then took about 25 drops; then abstained; and so on.

Meantime the symptoms which attended my case for the first six weeks of the experiment were these: enormous irritability and excitement of the whole system; the stomach, in particular, restored to a full feeling of vitality and sensibility, but often in great pain; unceasing restlessness night and day: sleep—I scarcely knew what it was: three hours out of the twenty-four was the utmost I had, and that so agitated and shallow that I heard every sound that was near me: lower jaw constantly swelling: mouth ulcerated: and many other distressing symptoms that would be tedious to repeat; amongst which, however, I must mention one, because it had never failed to accompany any attempt to renounce opium,—viz. violent sternutation. This now became exceedingly troublesome; sometimes lasting for two hours at once, and recurring at least twice or three times a day. I was not much surprised at this, on recollecting what I had somewhere heard or read that the membrane which lines the nostrils is a prolongation of that which lines the stomach; whence, I believe, are explained the inflammatory appearances about the nostrils of dram-drinkers. The sudden restoration of its original sensibility to the stomach expressed itself, I suppose, in this way. It is remarkable also that, during the whole period of years through which I had taken opium, I had never once caught cold (as the phrase is), nor even the slightest cough. But now a violent cold attacked me, and a cough soon after. In an unfinished fragment of a letter begun about this time to ——, I find these words: "You ask me to write the —— ——. Do you know Beaumont and Fletcher's play of Thierry and Theodoret? There you

will see my case as to sleep; nor is it much of an exaggeration in other features. I protest to you that I have a greater influx of thoughts in one hour at present than in a whole year under the reign of opium. It seems as though all the thoughts which had been frozen up for a decade of years by opium had now, according to the old fable, been thawed at once, such a multitude stream in upon me from all quarters. Yet such is my impatience and hideous irritability that, for one which I detain and write down, fifty escape me. In spite of my weariness from suffering and want of sleep, I cannot stand still or sit for two minutes together. '*I nunc, et versus tecum meditare canoros.*'"

At this stage of my experiment I sent to a neighbouring surgeon, requesting that he would come over to see me. In the evening he came; and, after briefly stating the case to him, I asked this question: Whether he did not think that the opium might have acted as a stimulus to the digestive organs, and that the present state of suffering in the stomach, which manifestly was the cause of the inability to sleep, might arise from indigestion? His answer was,—No: on the contrary, he thought that the suffering was caused by digestion itself,—which should naturally go on below the consciousness, but which, from the unnatural state of the stomach, vitiated by so long a use of opium, was become distinctly perceptible. This opinion was plausible; and the unintermitting nature of the suffering disposes me to think that it was true; for, if it had been any mere *irregular* affection of the stomach, it should naturally have intermitted occasionally, and constantly fluctuated as to degree. The intention of nature, as manifested in the healthy state, obviously is to withdraw from our notice all the vital motions, such as the circulation of the blood, the expansion and contraction of the lungs, the peristaltic action of the stomach, &c.; and opium, it seems, is able in this, as in other instances, to counteract her purposes.—By the advice of the surgeon, I tried *bitters*. For a short time these greatly mitigated the feelings under which I laboured; but about the forty-second day of the experiment the symptoms already noticed began to retire, and new ones to arise of a different and far more tormenting class: under these, with but a few intervals of remission, I have since continued to suffer. But I dismiss them undescribed for two reasons: 1st, because the mind revolts from retracing circumstantially any sufferings from which it is removed by too short or by no interval: to do this with minuteness enough to make the review of any use would be indeed "*infandum renovare dolorem*," and possibly without a sufficient motive: for, 2dly, I doubt whether this latter state be any way referrible to opium, positively considered, or even negatively; that is, whether it is to be numbered amongst the last evils from the direct action of opium, or even amongst the earliest evils consequent upon a *want* of opium in a system long deranged by its use. Certainly one part of the symptoms might be accounted for from the time of year (August); for, though the summer was not a hot one, yet in any case the sum of all the heat *funded* (if one may say so) during the previous months, added to the existing heat of that month, naturally renders August in its better half the hottest part of the year; and it so happened that the excessive

perspiration which even at Christmas attends any great reduction in the daily quantum of opium, and which in July was so violent as to oblige me to use a bath five or six times a day, had about the setting in of the hottest season wholly retired: on which account any bad effect of the heat might be the more unmitigated. Another symptom, viz. what in my ignorance I call internal rheumatism (sometimes affecting the shoulders, &c., but more often appearing to be seated in the stomach), seemed again less probably attributable to the opium or the want of opium than to the dampness of the house which I inhabit,[1] which had about that time attained its maximum,—July having been, as usual, a month of incessant rain in our most rainy part of England.

Under these reasons for doubting whether opium had any connexion with the latter stage of my bodily wretchedness,—(except, indeed, as an occasional cause, as having left the body weaker and more crazy, and thus predisposed to any mal-influence whatever),—I willingly spare my reader all description of it. Let it perish to him; and would that I could as easily say let it perish to my own remembrances, that any future hours of tranquillity may not be disturbed by too vivid an ideal of possible human misery!

So much for the sequel of my experiment; as to the former stage, in which properly lies the experiment and its application to other cases, I must request my reader not to forget the reasons for which I have recorded it. These were two: 1st, a belief that I might add some trifle to the history of opium as a medical agent. In this I am aware that I have not at all fulfilled my own intentions, in consequence of the torpor of mind, pain of body, and extreme disgust to the subject, which besieged me whilst writing that part of my paper; which part, being immediately sent off to the press (distant about five degrees of latitude), cannot be corrected or improved. But from this account, rambling as it may be, it is evident that thus much of benefit may arise to the persons most interested in such a history of opium,—namely, to Opium-eaters in general,—that it establishes, for their consolation and encouragement, the fact that opium may be renounced, and without greater sufferings than an ordinary resolution may support; and by a pretty rapid course of descent.[2]

To communicate this result of my experiment was my foremost purpose. 2dly, as a purpose collateral to this, I wished to explain how it had become impossible for me to compose a Third Part in time to accompany this republication: for during the very time of this

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[1] In saying this I meant no disrespect to the individual house, as the reader will understand when I tell him that, with the exception of one or two princely mansions, and some few inferior ones that have been coated with Roman cement, I am not acquainted with any house in this mountainous district which is wholly waterproof. The architecture of books, I flatter myself, is conducted on just principles in this country; but for any other architecture it is in a barbarous state, and, what is worse, in a retrograde state.

[2] On which last notice I would remark that mine was *too* rapid, and the suffering therefore needlessly aggravated; or rather, perhaps, it was not sufficiently continuous and equably graduated. But, that the reader may judge for himself, and, above all, that the Opium-eater who is preparing to

experiment the proof-sheets of this reprint were sent to me from London; and such was my inability to expand or to improve them that I could not even bear to read them over with attention enough to notice the press errors, or to correct any verbal inaccuracies. These were my reasons for troubling my reader with any record, long or short, of experiments relating to so truly base a subject as my own body; and I am earnest with the reader, that he will not forget them, or so far misapprehend me as to believe it possible that I would condescend to so rascally a subject for its own sake, or, indeed, for any less object than that of general benefit to others. Such an animal as the self-observing valetudinarian I know there is: I have met him myself occasionally; and I know that he is the worst imaginable *heautontimoroumenos;* aggravating and sustaining, by calling into distinct consciousness, every symptom that would else perhaps, under a different direction given to the thoughts, become evanescent. But, as to myself, so profound is my contempt for this undignified and selfish habit that I could as little condescend to it as I could to spend

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retire from business may have every sort of information before him, I subjoin my diary.

FIRST WEEK.

	Drops of Laud.
Mond. June 24	130
,, 25	140
,, 26	130
,, 27	80
,, 28	80
,, 29	80
,, 30	80

SECOND WEEK.

	Drops of Laud.
Mond. July 1	80
,, 2	80
,, 3	90
,, 4	100
,, 5	80
,, 6	80
,, 7	80

THIRD WEEK.

	Drops of Laud.
Mond. July 8	300
,, 9	50
,, 10	Hiatus in MS.
,, 11	
,, 12	
,, 13	
,, 14	76

FOURTH WEEK.

	Drops of Laud.
Mond. July 15	76
,, 16	73½
,, 17	73½
,, 18	70
,, 19	240
,, 20	80
,, 21	350

FIFTH WEEK.

	Drops of Laud.
Mond. July 22	60
,, 23	none
,, 24	none
,, 25	none
,, 26	200
,, 27	none

What mean these abrupt relapses, the reader will ask, perhaps, to such numbers as 300, 350, &c.? The *impulse* to these relapses was mere infirmity of purpose: the *motive*, where any motive blended with this impulse, was either the principle of "*reculer pour mieux sauter*"—(for under the torpor of a large dose, which lasted for a day or two, a less quantity satisfied the stomach, which, on awaking, found itself partly accustomed to this new ration),—or else it was this principle—that of sufferings otherwise equal those will be borne best which meet with a mood of anger: now, whenever I ascended to any large dose, I was furiously incensed on the following day, and could then have borne anything.

my time in watching a poor servant-girl,—to whom at this moment I hear some lad or other making love at the back of my house. Is it for a Transcendental Philosopher to feel any curiosity on such an occasion? Or can I, whose life is worth only eight and a half years' purchase, be supposed to have leisure for such trivial employments? —However, to put this out of question, I shall say one thing which will, perhaps, shock some readers; but I am sure it ought not to do so, considering the motives on which I say it. No man, I suppose, employs much of his time on the phenomena of his own body without some regard for it; whereas the reader sees that, so far from looking upon mine with any complacency or regard, I hate it and make it the object of my bitter ridicule and contempt; and I should not be displeased to know that the last indignities which the law inflicts upon the bodies of the worst malefactors might hereafter fall upon it. And, in testification of my sincerity in saying this, I shall make the following offer. Like other men, I have particular fancies about the place of my burial: having lived chiefly in a mountainous region, I rather cleave to the conceit that a grave in a green church-yard amongst the ancient and solitary hills will be a sublimer and more tranquil place of repose for a philosopher than any in the hideous Golgothas of London. Yet, if the gentlemen of Surgeons' Hall think that any benefit can redound to their science from inspecting the appearances in the body of an Opium-eater, let them speak but a word, and I will take care that mine shall be legally secured to them—*i.e.*, as soon as I have done with it myself. Let them not hesitate to express their wishes upon any scruples of false delicacy and consideration for my feelings: I assure them that they will do me too much honour by "demonstrating" on such a crazy body as mine; and it will give me pleasure to anticipate this posthumous revenge and insult inflicted upon that which has caused me so much suffering in this life. Such bequests are not common: reversionary benefits contingent upon the death of the testator are indeed dangerous to announce in many cases. Of this we have a remarkable instance in the habits of a Roman prince,—who used, upon any notification made to him by rich persons that they had left him a handsome estate in their wills, to express his entire satisfaction at such arrangements, and his gracious acceptance of those loyal legacies; but then, if the testators neglected to give him immediate possession of the property,—if they traitorously "persisted in living" (*si vivere perseverarent*, as Suetonius expresses it),—he was highly provoked, and took his measures accordingly. In those times, and from one of the worst of the Cæsars, we might expect such conduct; but I am sure that, from English surgeons at this day, I need look for no expressions of impatience, or of any other feelings but such as are answerable to that pure love of science and all its interests which induces me to make such an offer.

Sept. 30*th*, 1822.

END OF VOL. III